

12. 9. 6

TWELVE
DISCOURSES
ON

The Grounds of a Christian's Joy

Obedience to CHRIST the Way to Salvation.

CHRIST the great Christian Prophet.

Church Privileges a vain Security.

The Consecration, and Priesthood of CHRIST.

Enoch's Faith.

By JOSEPH DODSON, M.A.



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DISCO

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

J H N



Y OUR Lordship has kindly
revealed Religion with so very
great Attention and Success, as
renders your Lordship's Conversation
extremely interesting to those that have
a true Relish for the most useful
Knowledge. I esteem it a great Fel-
lows that I have had so many Oppor-
tunities of talking freely with you
Your Lordship upon the most important
Points. You have not only inform-

TO the RIGHT HONOURABLE

J O H N

Lord Visc^t. *Barrington.*

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordship has study'd
reveal'd Religion with so very
great Attention and Success, as
renders your Lordship's Conversation
extremely instructing to those that have
a true Relish for the most useful
Knowledge. I esteem it a great Feli-
city that I have had so many Oppor-
tunities of talking freely with your
Lordship upon the most important
Points: You have not only inform-

DEDICATION.

ed me of many things I was ignorant of before, but have also greatly increased my Thirst after a more thorough and intimate Acquaintance with the infallible Dictates of the Holy Spirit. I am fully convinced that a Man may be a Master of a great many Systems and polemical Tracts of Divinity, and yet be a very ignorant Divine when compared with your Lordship, who has wisely made the Bible, together with such Parts of Learning as are necessary for the better understanding of it, your principal Study.

Your Lordship has the best Right to all the Fruits of my Labours in the Study of the Holy Oracles of God, as you are your self so great a Lover of Scriptural Knowledge; and as I have received so much Benefit both from your Instruction and Advice: I therefore humbly offer unto your Lordship the following Discourses, which
I have

DEDICATION.

I have sincerely endeavoured to form
upon the finished Plan of the Holy
Scriptures.

I am,

my Lord,

your Lordship's

most obliged,

humble Servant,

Joseph Dodson.

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N. B. When I was considering the Point of *Preaching Christ*, Sermon. X. the two following Texts slip'd me: Acts v. 42. *And daily in the Temple, and every House, they ceased not to teach, and to preach Jesus Christ*. Acts viii. 5. *Then Philip went down to the City of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them*.

The Original of the first mention'd Text plainly shews the meaning to be, that the Apostles preach'd that *Jesus was the Christ*; and I think 'tis evident that the other Text is to be understood in the same Sense, "To preach Christ, and to say that Jesus whom they preach'd is the Christ, is the same thing in the Apostolick Language; in which Sense, Philip preach'd Christ to the Samaritans. See Dr. Whitby's *Examen Millii*, p. 52.

h ons

ERRATA

S E R M O N I.

Joy in the Hope of Glory.

R O M. V. 2.

— *And rejoice in Hope of the Glory
of God.*

THE *Jews*, for a great many Years, enjoy'd the most distinguishing Privileges; but instead of making a suitable Improvement of them, or commiserating the Case of the *Gentiles*, *who had no hope, and were without God in the world*; they indulg'd themselves in Haughtiness and Vanity, and in a proud Contempt of all that did not belong to their Nation, or Profession. They valu'd themselves on being the Descendants of *Abraham*; and glory'd in Circumcision. *They made their boast of God*, Rom. ii. 17. *and of the Law*, v. 23; and could not allow any the Privileges of the People of God, that did not submit to

B
their

2 Joy in the Hope of Glory.

their Law, and take upon them the Badge of Circumcision.

The *Apostle*, in his *Epistle* to the *Romans*, with great Judgment and Address, exposes the Vanity of their boasting. He first removes the Foundation of their glorying, by shewing the weakness of their Pretensions: And then he proceeds to encourage the *Gentile Converts* to adhere to the Profession of *Christianity*, without submitting to Circumcision and the Law; by shewing them, that they had real matter of Glorying; solid and substantial Grounds of Joy.

The first Ground of Joy, that he mentions, is *the Hope of Glory*. The second is, *their Sufferings for the Honour of Christ, and the Gospel*, v. 3. The third Ground of Glorying is *God Himself*, who has shewn them Mercy in Redeeming them by the Death of his *Son*, and in admitting them to partake of greater Privileges than those of the *Jews*, v. 11.

I will consider them in the same order, in which the *Apostle* has thought it proper to range them. The first Ground of Glorying is their *Hope of the Glory of God*; by which is meant the Glory that God has in Reserve for them; and which is clearly promised in the Gospel of Christ.

As the *Apostle* seems to oppose the Grounds of their Glorying, or Joy, to those on which the *Jews* built their vain and imaginary

Joy in the Hope of Glory. 3

ginary Hopes and Triumphs; it may not be amiss to enquire,

I. Whether the *Jews* had any assurances in their Law of everlasting Happiness, as the Reward of Obedience to it?

When I have dispatch'd this Enquiry, I will shew,

II. That the Gospel contains the most clear and expers Promises of everlasting Life.

III. I will prove that the *Hope of Glory* is a real Foundation of Joy.

I. I am to enquire, whether the *Jews* had any assurances in their Law of everlasting Happiness, as the Reward of Obedience to it?

By way of Introduction, and that the Design of this Discourse may be the more complete, I will look back to the Times before *Moses*.

The first Promise that we meet with, is express'd in Terms that are of a dark and doubtful signification. Our first Parents, after their fatal Revolt from God, are encouraged with a Promise, that *the Seed of the Woman shou'd bruise the Serpent's Head*. 'Twas difficult, if not altogether impossible, to spell out the full meaning of the Promise. They might assuredly conclude, that the Promise contained in it some extraor-

4 Joy in the Hope of Glory.

dinary Blessing: But surely, 'twas no easy matter to discover any assurance of everlasting Happiness.

After this, God made a Covenant with *Noah*: He had found Grace in his Sight, at a time of universal Defection; and therefore, 'tis reasonable to suppose, that he promised Safety and Protection to him and his Family, when the whole World was to be over-whelm'd with a Deluge. I do not see that any other Blessing was comprehended in the Covenant.

Soon after, God promised that he wou'd no more destroy the World with a Flood; and he set his Bow in the Heavens, as a Token of the Covenant. We do not find that everlasting Life was promised to *Noah*, or his Descendants, as a Motive of Obedience.

If we take a view of the Encouragement, that was given to the succeeding *Patriarchs*, we shall find that they had the Promise both of temporal and eternal Blessings. But then, 'tis to be observed, that the Promises of the latter kind, were delivered in general and obscure Expressions. God promised *Abraham* a numerous Posterity; and that *in his Seed all the Families of the Earth should be blessed*. He also promised *that his Seed shou'd enjoy the Land of Canaan for an Inheritance, and that he would be his Shield, and his exceeding great Reward*, Gen. xv. i.

After

Joy in the Hope of Glory. 5

After this, he promised *to be his God, and the God of his Seed*. This indeed was a comprehensive Promise, as well as of large extent: But the meaning of so general a Promise was rendered dubious, by the many plain and express Promises of temporal Blessings that always accompanied it.

We find the same Promises renewed to *Isaac*, Gen. xxvi. 3, 4. and afterwards to *Jacob*, Gen. xxviii. 13, 14, 15. There is no mention of eternal Life in any of the Revelations which God made to these ancient *Patriarchs*. We have no account of any clear and express Promise of this nature in the sacred History. The *Patriarchal Covenant* was established upon temporal Promises; excepting only the Promise of the *blessed Seed*, and perhaps *that* of being their God; neither of which cou'd be distinctly understood without a farther Revelation.

I pass on to the principal Thing to be consider'd.

When the Children of *Israel* were in the Wilderness of *Sinai*, God was pleased to enter into a special Covenant with them. This is commonly call'd the *Mosaick Covenant*; *Moses* being consider'd as the Mediator thereof. The Promises that are annex'd to this Covenant, appear to be all of a temporal Nature. The first account that is given of them, is in the following words; *If thou shalt indeed do all that I speak, then*

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will I be an Enemy to thine Enemies, and an Adversary to thine Adversaries. — Te shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy Bread and thy Water: and I will take Sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their Young, nor be barren in thy Land: The number of thy Days I will fulfil. I will send my Fear before thee, and will destroy all the People to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine Enemies turn their Backs unto thee, Exod. xxiii. 22, 25, 26, 27.

Of what a temporal and perishing Nature are the following Promises, wherewith God encouraged his People in their Obedience to him; *If ye walk in my Statutes, and keep my Commandments, and do them; then will I give you Rain in due Season, and the Land shall yield her Increase, and the Trees of the Field shall yield their Fruit; and your Threshing shall reach unto the Vintage, and the Vintage shall reach unto the sowing time, and ye shall eat your Bread to the full, and dwell in your Land safely, Lev. xxvi. 3, 4, 5, &c.*

Indeed, God here Promises to be their God: But tho' this Expression is comprehensive of the greatest Blessings, and consequently of the Promise of eternal Life; it may be doubted, whether God intended any more by this Promise, at this time, than that he wou'd conduct them to the Land of
Canaan,

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Canaan, and continue with them there, and bless them as his peculiar People.

1. Because the Promise [that he would be their God] is subjoin'd to a great many Promises of a temporal Nature, which seem to restrain its signification, and lead us to interpret it as a summary Promise of the greatest temporal Blessings.

2. Because among the Curses which immediately follow, and are threatened in case of Disobedience, there is not one word of eternal Punishment: They are all of a temporal Nature, and only respect this present Life; which cannot be easily accounted for, on the supposition that eternal Life is amongst the Blessings that are promised to the Obedient.

There are many other Places, where Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and such like things are promised as a Reward to the Obedient; but in none of them is there, as I apprehend, any Promise of everlasting Life.

Some, 'tis probable, will be apt to think, that the following words contain an express Promise of everlasting Life; *Ye shall keep my Statutes and my Judgments, which if a Man do, he shall live in them*, Lev. xviii. 5. But, 1. Whoever considers, that long Life is frequently promised in the *Old Testament* to all that shou'd keep God's Statutes and Judgments, will see sufficient Reason to conclude, that the Expression is, at least,

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of a doubtful signification. 2. This Matter seems to be clearly explain'd in another place; and the meaning of the Promise to be restrain'd to this present temporal Life, *Deut. xxx. 15, 16. See I have set before thee this Day, LIFE and Good, DEATH and Evil: In that I command thee this Day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his Commandments, and his Statutes, and his Judgments, that thou mayst LIVE AND MULTIPLY: And the Lord thy God shall bless thee, in the Land whither thou goest to possess it.* The meaning of Death which is threatened to the disobedient, is explained in *ver. 18. If thou wilt not hear — ye shall not PROLONG YOUR DAYS upon the Land, whither thou passest over Jordan to possess it.* It appears from hence, that the Life that is set before them, as the Reward of keeping *Moses's Covenant*, is a long and prosperous Life in the Land of *Canaan*.

When *Moses* repeats the principal Laws, which God had given the *Israelites*, and earnestly exhorts them to be obedient to them, he promises them only temporal Blessings. *Deut. iv. 40. Thou shalt keep therefore his Statutes, and his Commandments, which I command thee this Day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy Children after thee, and that thou mayst prolong thy Days upon the Earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee*

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thee for ever. See also *Deut.* v. 33. vii. 13, 14, 15. viii. 1. xi. 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 21, &c.

I pass on to the Consideration of the Covenant which God made with the *Israelites* in the Plains of *Moab*; which, I think, is no new Covenant, distinct from that which I have already mentioned, but only a renewal of it, after it had been shamefully violated. 'Tis true, there are some new Laws added, and others are more fully explain'd; and the Sanctions, wherewith Obedience is enforc'd, are set before them more at large: But they are of as temporal a Nature, as those I have already mentioned to belong to the Covenant which was made at *Horeb*. We have an account of their entering into Covenant in the xxixth of *Deuteronomy*: And in the preceding Chapter, we have a very particular Account of the Blessings and the Curses, *ver. 2, &c.* *All these Blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the Voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the City, and blessed shalt thou be in the Field. Blessed shall be the Fruit of thy Body, and the Fruit of thy Ground, and the Fruit of thy Cattle, the Increase of thy Kine, and the Flocks of thy Sheep. Blessed shall be thy Basket and thy Store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*

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All the Blessings that follow are of the same Nature.

Tho' hitherto temporal Promises had prov'd ineffectual; and the *Israelites* had been guilty of frequent Violations of the Laws of God; he did not yet think fit to give them any great Encouragement, or make them any clearer Revelation of his kind Intentions concerning them. *Moses* must not have the Honour of *bringing Life and Immortality to Light*.

Or rather, it was not thought proper that the Covenant, whereof he alone was the Mediator, shou'd be established upon spiritual and eternal Promises. Though he had found the People to be stiff-necked and rebellious, and not to be reclaimed either by temporal Mercies, or temporal Judgments; and knew that after his Decease they wou'd have no better Effect upon them; yet, in his last and dying Exhortation, he cou'd not address them in any other Language, cou'd not make use of any other Topicks of Persuasion, than those they had been long accustomed to, and which had prov'd so ineffectual; his Commission extended no farther. The very last Charge, that he gives them, is enforc'd with no other than temporal Promises. He said unto them, *Set your Hearts to all the words that I testify unto you this day, which ye shall command*
your

Joy in the Hope of Glory. 11

your Children to observe to do all the words of this Law. For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life; and through all this thing you shall prolong your Days in the Land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it, Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

If we carry our Enquiries to the other side of *Jordan*, we shall find that *Joshua* had no Commission to promise the *Israelites* any better things than what are contain'd in the Law of *Moses*. 'Tis thought that the People entered into Covenant the third time, after the taking of *Ai*. The Foundation upon which this Opinion is built, is in *Joshua* viii. 30, 31, &c. If they did, 'twas only a renewal of the former Covenant: For as no other Laws are mentioned than those of *Moses*, so there were no other Blessings pronounc'd than those which had formerly been enjoin'd by *Moses's* express Order; and were certainly of the same Nature with those, which he had himself so often promised.

Joshua, in the latter end of his Life, exhorts the People to Obedience. The following words will let us see, what were the Motives wherewith he encouraged the People. *The Lord your God will expel the Nations from before you, and drive them from out of your sight, and ye shall possess their Land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you. Be ye therefore very courageous*
to

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to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, Jos. xxiii. 5, 6.

Thus, you see, it does not appear that *Moses's* Law was enforc'd with the Promise of eternal Life.

It may be said, did none in the Times which I have considered hope for eternal Life? I answer, they might *hope* for it, and yet all that I have been endeavouring to prove be certainly true. Men of deep Penetration, and especially such as were possess'd of the *Spirit of God*, might see probable Grounds to hope for future and eternal Blessings: Or they might have clearer Revelations than any that are contain'd in the Books of *Moses*. *Abraham* believ'd the separate Existence of Souls, and the Power of God to raise the dead to Life again; as is plain from *Heb. xi. 19*. And yet we have no account of this in the History of *Abraham* in the Book of *Genesis*. In like manner, tho' the same History does not contain any clear and express Revelation of everlasting Life; yet *Abraham*, who is the Father of them that believe, might have such a Revelation. 'Tis certain that *he look'd for a City that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*, *Heb. xi. 10*.

'Tis not improbable that *Job* believed the Resurrection unto eternal Life; tho' it cannot certainly be prov'd from *Job xix. 26*.
because

Joy in the Hope of Glory. 13

because the words are variously render'd, and of doubtful signification.

Tho' *Moses* in his Law did not, I think, promise eternal Life to the Children of *Israel*; yet, I doubt not, he fully expected it himself; for 'tis said, *He had Respect unto the Recompence of Reward*, Heb. xi. 26.

As to the *Prophets*, which appear'd in the following Ages of the *Jewish Church*, I doubt not but they had clearer Discoveries of eternal Life, than any that are to be met with in the History of *Moses*. *David*, in particular, firmly believ'd a Life after this. What else can be the meaning of the following words? *As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy Likeness*, Psal. xvii. 15. I think that any other Interpretation, that wou'd draw them to a different meaning, must needs be forc'd and improbable.

After the *Jews* were carry'd away captive to *Babylon*, the Doctrine of the Resurrection appears to have been fully known to the Prophets of those Times; and they communicated it to the People: Express intimations of this important Point were given particularly to *Daniel* by the *Angel*, in the following remarkable Prophecy, *And many of them that sleep in the Dust of the Earth, shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt.*
The

14 *Joy in the Hope of Glory.*

The *Jews* in their Captivity, and after their return to their own Land again, were strongly tempted to desert the Law of their God, by becoming Idolaters; and therefore 'tis conjectur'd, that God saw it necessary to support them under Persecution, with the hopes of everlasting Life. There is a Passage in the *Heb.* Ch. xi. v. 35. which, as is highly probable, belongs to the History of those distracted Times. *Some were tortur'd, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection.*

'Tis certain, that in our Saviour's Time a great many of the *Jews* believ'd the Resurrection, and a future State. For tho' the *Sadducees* did not believe either; the *Pharisees*, the greatest Sect amongst them, believ'd them both. 'Tis said, *Acts* xxiii. 8. *That whereas the Sadducees say, that there is no Resurrection, neither Angel, nor Spirit, the Pharisees confess both.* But then we are told by a learned Jew, * *That this Resurrection of theirs, was no more than a Resurrection of the Soul only, by its Transmigration into another Body, and being born anew with it; and that they excluded all that were notoriously wicked from this Resurrection.* For of such their Notion was, that their Souls, as soon as separated from their Bodies, were transmitted into a state of everlasting Woe, there to suffer the

* Josephus de Bello Judaico. Lib. 2. Cap. 12.

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Punishment of their Sins to all Eternity. But as to lesser Crimes their Opinion was, that they were punished in the Bodies, which the Souls of those that committed them were next sent into.

'Tis thought that it was in Consequence of this Opinion, that our Lord's Disciples asked him in the Case of the Man that was born blind, *Who did Sin, this Man, or his Parents, that he was born blind?* John ix. 2. This plainly supposeth an antecedent state of Being; otherwise it cannot be conceived that a Man cou'd sin before he was born.

It may be said, that in the Apostle *Paul's* Description of the State of the *Gentiles*, before the preaching of the Gospel to them, as well as to the *Jews*, 'tis said, that *they were without Hope*, Eph. ii. 12. which will be thought to imply, that the *Jews* were not without the Hope of everlasting Life. I am apt to think that the Bulk of the *Jews*, in the Ages preceding *Christianity*, especially after they became acquainted with *Daniel's* famous Prophecy concerning the Resurrection unto eternal Life, conceiv'd some Hopes of a future state of Blessedness: But then, I am inclin'd to believe, that their Conceptions of the Nature of the heavenly Felicity were not only very obscure, but exceeding gross and erroneous. 'Tis probable they had no other Notion of it than as being an earthly Felicity, consisting of
bodily

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bodily Pleasures, not unlike those that are enjoy'd on the Earth.

My first Reason is, because 'tis expressly asserted, that our Lord *Jesus* brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. He dispel'd the Darkness that clouded this important Doctrine, by many clear and express Revelations concerning it; and has given the most infallible assurances that there is such a future state of Happiness to be enjoy'd by every sincere Christian.

My second Reason is taken from the captious Question of the *Sadducees*, which we find they propos'd to our Lord, concerning the Woman who had married five Brethren successively; saying unto him, *In the Resurrection whose Wife shall she be, for they all had her?* Mat. xxii. 28. It appears to me highly probable from this Text, that the *Pharisees*, the great Assertors of the Resurrection, in opposition to the contrary Belief of the *Sadducees*, imagin'd, that amongst other Pleasures of the Body, the Enjoyment of a state of Matrimony wou'd be continued in the other World; and that the *Sadducees*, who had been frequent Witnesses of their asserting these things, might suppose that our Lord *Jesus* maintained the same Notions concerning the Resurrection and a future State.

We

We are told that the *Jews* of later Ages believe the true Resurrection of the same Soul and Body together; and that all their Books now extant, speak of the Resurrection of the Dead, and the last Judgment, no otherwise, in the main Particulars, than as the *Christians* do. I suppose they began to envy the Christian Churches the sole Possession of so comfortable a Doctrine; and perhaps cou'd not bear the Reproaches of some, who might endeavour to humble their Pride, by charging their Law with a great and manifest Defect as to this Particular: And therefore they profess to believe it as well as the *Christians*; and not only so, but have endeavour'd, as much as possible, to shew, that their Law contains Promises of everlasting Life; and they think they have found a Text that does not only plainly prove this, but makes the Salvation of all that are not *Jews*, exceeding doubtful at least. This Text is found amongst the Blessings, which *Moses* pronounc'd upon *Israel*, a little before his Death, and is as follows; *Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O People, saved by the Lord*, Deut. xxxiii. 29. Yet 'tis plain from the words going before, and following after, that nothing more is meant than a temporal Redemption, or temporal Deliverance. *The eternal God is my Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms: And*

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he

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he shall thrust out the Enemy from before thee, and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: The Fountain of Jacob shall be upon a Land of Corn and Wine; also his Heavens shall drop down Dew. Then follow the words on which some of the Jews lay so great a stress, as containing a Promise of everlasting Happiness, to which the following words are immediately subjoin'd. *The Shield of thy Help, and who is the Sword of thy Excellency; and thine Enemies shall be found Liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high Places.* The Context only speaks of Protection and Deliverance in this World. Besides, 'tis not at all likely, that the Promise of everlasting Life shou'd be crowded in the midst of so many Promises of temporal Blessings.

Thus I have finished my Enquiry; and the substance of what I have endeavour'd to prove is as follows.

1. The Promises that were made to the *Patriarchs* before the giving of the Law, were some of them of a spiritual and eternal Nature. *The Gospel is said to have been preach'd unto Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. The Scripture foreseeing that God wou'd justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all Nations be blessed. And 'tis said, v. 18. That God gave the Inheritance to*

to Abraham by Promise. But then it must be acknowledged, that it was only an obscure Gospel that was preach'd unto the *Fathers*, and that there was a veil upon the Promises.

2. The Sanctions of the Law, or *Mosaick Covenant*, appear to have been wholly of a temporal Nature.

3. The *Evangelical Promises* that were made to the *Patriarchs*, and deliver'd in dark and cover'd Expressions, were reveal'd in somewhat clearer Terms to the Prophets, and by them to the People; especially about the Time of the Captivity; but were not properly Additions to the Sanctions of the Law; did not become legal Promises; being only a clearer Revelation of Promises previous to the giving of the Law.

Before I proceed to the next thing I propos'd to consider; I must take Notice of some Passages in the fourth of the *Hebrews*. 'Tis said, v. 2. *That the Gospel was preach'd unto the Jews.* It appears to me, by considering the Context, that by the Gospel that is said to have been preach'd unto them, is meant the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*; in regard they are said to have been depriv'd of entering into the promised Rest, because they did not believe the Gospel that was preached unto them. Now 'tis plain from the History of *Moses*, that the Reason why they perished in the Wilderness, was

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because they did not believe God's Promise of giving them the Land of *Canaan* for an Inheritance.

Indeed, the Promise of the Land of *Canaan* typified a more glorious Rest, which God had in Reserve for his People, and which he design'd to bestow upon them. But whether it must be look'd upon as a proper Promise of an *heavenly Canaan*, any more than the Institution of the Seventh-day Sabbath, which was a Type of the eternal Sabbath, was a real Promise of the Rest that was thereby typified, I leave to the determination of the Learned.

All that can be built upon the Apostle's Reasoning, v. 7, 8. from *Psal.* xcv. 7, &c. is, I think, this; that the Psalmist, long after the Publication of the Sanctions of the *Mosaic Covenant*, gave an Hint, that God had a better Rest in store for his People, than the Rest which they at that Time enjoy'd in the Land of *Canaan*; saying, *to Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts*, i. e. as your Father's did: And so were deprived of the Rest which you enjoy. They were left to conjecture from this, that if they were not disobedient like their Fathers, God intended better Things for them than they were in Possession of. If the *Psalmist's* words must be said to contain a promise of future Rest, it cannot be deny'd that they are very obscure, and stood
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in need of Light from some inspir'd Interpreter, to render their meaning more apparent.

II. I am to shew that the Gospel contains the most clear and express Promises of everlasting Life. Tho' everlasting Happiness was included in the Blessing which was promised to *Abraham* and his Seed; it cannot be denied that it was wrap'd up in great Obscurity, in comparison of the clear Revelation of the Gospel. Few, it may be supposed, had Penetration enough to discover the hidden Treasure. But the *Lord Jesus Christ* has fully revealed it to the World. Both *Jew* and *Gentile* are oblig'd to own that the *Gospel has brought Life and Immortality to Light*. The *Jews* must acknowledge that the Promise that was made to their *Fathers* was express'd in general Terms; and that it was no easy matter to discover all the particular Blessings contain'd in so comprehensive a Promise. The Gospel has set them in the clearest Light. We who enjoy the Benefit of the Gospel Revelation, know that the promised Seed is a Blessing to the whole World, inasmuch as he is *the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him*. We know that *the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. vi. 23. And that *he is the Hope of Glory*, Col. i. 27. This is the glorious Testimony that God giveth of his

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Son in the Gospel, 1 Joh. v. 11. *This is the Record that God hath given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.* But the Gentiles are under greater Obligations to the Gospel than the Jews, for the clear discovery of Life and Immortality. They were Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World, Eph. ii. 12. And therefore the Apostle Paul is sent with an express Commission to preach to them the Doctrine of everlasting Life. Christ, saith he, *hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a Preacher, and an Apostle, and a Teacher of the Gentiles,* 2 Tim. i. 10, 11.

Besides the express Promises which the Gospel contains of everlasting Life; we have a clear account of the Resurrection, and Day of Judgment; when we must all be rewarded according to our Works. *The Hour is coming, in which all that are in the Graves shall hear the Voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation,* John v. 28, 29.

Farther, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Promise of eternal Life, are abundantly confirm'd by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead. *God hath appoint-*

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ed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead, Acts xvii. 31. And 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you. So that the Promise of everlasting Life is manifest in the Gospel, and sufficiently confirm'd.

But, besides the clear Discovery of everlasting Life in the Gospel, 'tis proper to observe, that there are several Texts in the *New Testament*, which seem to prove that the Gospel Covenant only hath Promises of everlasting Life; and that 'tis absurd for any to assert that they also belong'd to the Covenant at Mount Sinai.

The *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* making a Comparison between the Priesthood of *Christ*, and the *Levitical* Priesthood; and also between the old Covenant and the new, has the following Observation; *Now he (Christ) hath obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon* BETTER PROMISES, *Heb. viii. 6. So Heb. vii.*

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19. *The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a BETTER HOPE did.*

There is a Text in the *Galatians* which seems to intimate, that if the Law cou'd have given Life, the Gospel which was preach'd to *Abraham*, wou'd have been of no Effect, *Gal. iii. 17, 18.* *This, I say, that the Covenant that was confirm'd before of God in Christ, the Law which was four hundred and thirty Years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the Promise of none Effect. For if the Inheritance, [i. e. the Blessing promised to Abraham] be of the Law, it is no more of Promise: But God gave it to Abraham by Promise. And so Rom. iv. 14. If they which are of the Law be Heirs, Faith is made void, and the Promise made of none Effect.*

But tho' the first Covenant cou'd have no other than temporal Promises, the second Covenant may; there being no Danger of making void the Promise that was made to *Abraham*, in regard the Blessing of *Abraham*, according to the Christian Covenant, cometh upon the Circumcision, and Uncircumcision through the Righteousness of Faith.

Accordingly, as I observed before, we are assur'd that the second Covenant, whereof *Christ* is the Mediator, contains better Promises than the first, whereof *Moses* was the Mediator. Besides the greater Aids
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of the Spirit, the new Covenant promiseth an everlasting *Canaan* above. *For this Cause he [Christ] is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of Death, for the Redemption of the Transgressions that were under the first Testament; they which are called, might receive the Promise of an eternal Inheritance,* Heb. ix. 15. The temporal Promises of the Law were of little efficacy to reclaim Sinners, and bring them back to God; and therefore the Gospel introduces *a better Hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

III. I proceed to shew, that the Hope of the Glory of God is a real Foundation of Joy.

I. It affords the good Christian Joy, inasmuch as under the Influence thereof, he is enabled to bring forth the comfortable Fruits of Righteousness. The *Hope of Glory* gives Life to all the Graces of the Spirit, and inspires the true Believer with Zeal and Resolution in his Master's Service. The Gospel, when it was first published to the *Gentile World*, was exceedingly successful in reforming Mens Manners, particularly as it brought the joyful Message of Salvation, and gave ample Assurances of everlasting Life to every sincere Penitent. This is fully attested by the Apostle *Paul*, in his *Epistle to the Colossians*, Ch. i. ver. 5, 6. *We give*

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give Thanks to God, says he, for the Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the Truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the World, and bringeth forth Fruit, as it doth also in you, since the Day ye heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in Truth.

'Tis the joyful Expectation of the blessed Hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, that engages us to deny ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, Tit. ii. 12, 13.

This gives Joy to the upright in Heart; solid and lasting Joy. Every thing that enables them to subdue the Body of Sin and Death; to mortify their Corruption, and to live a Life of Piety and Devotedness to God, fills them with Joy and Consolation. Motives and Helps to an holy Life, are some of the most delightful Subjects of their Meditation. The Psalmist esteem'd the Laws of God more than Gold, because they are pure, enlightening the Eyes, Psal. xix. 8, 10.

2. The Hope of Glory gives Joy, as it is a great support in Times of Adversity. When this World frowns upon us, it must afford the most ravishing Joy to view the Realms of everlasting Bliss, *Where there is no Curse to imbitter our Blessings; no Night to obscure our Glory and Felicity.* The good Christian thinks all the Burthens he undergoes, and

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all the Toils and Hardships he meets with in this Wilderness State, light and easy, whenever he has an hopeful Prospect of the heavenly *Canaan*.

The *Israelites*, indeed, tho' they had the Promise of a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, the Glory of all Lands, murmur'd and repin'd in the Wilderness. Every little Difficulty distress'd them, and fill'd them with uneasy Complaints. But this was owing to their Unbelief: They doubted whether God was among them, whether his Presence wou'd go with them, and conduct them to the promised Land. *They tempted the Lord, saying, is the Lord amongst us or not?* Exod. xvii. 7.

If we do not fall after the same Example of Unbelief; if we are possess'd of that Faith which is the *Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen*, we shall encounter the Difficulties in our way with Courage, and with Constancy; and shall reckon our Afflictions light, and but for a Moment. The Prospect of a *Crown of Righteousness, which was laid up for the Apostle Paul*, was of the greatest Service to him in his Christian Course and Warfare. It supported him in all his Troubles, as well as at the Approach of Death. *The Hope which entereth into that within the Veil, is as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast*, Heb. vi. 19. It keeps us safe and
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in Peace; stedfast, and unshaken, in the midst of all the Storms and Billows of Affliction. 'Tis of particular Service in Times of Persecution: The *Apostle* advises the *Thessalonians*, whom he forewarns of approaching Tryals for Conscience sake, *To take for an Helmet the Hope of Salvation*, 1 Thess. v. 8.

3. The Hope of Glory gives Joy, inasmuch as it puts to silence the Accusations of our Consciences, and represents God as reconciled unto us. The Message of Salvation is glad Tydings of great Joy; much more an Interest in that Salvation. If we are *Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, we are put among the Children, and have escap'd the Wrath to come*. The remembrance of past Guilt may afflict us; but cannot bring us into Bondage thro' Fear of Death. A sense of our Unworthiness of the least of God's Favours may greatly humble us: But as 'tis *our Father's good Pleasure to give us the Kingdom*, we ought to banish all distracting Fears, and live in the joyful Expectation of the promised Felicity. *They have strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge to lay hold of the Hope that is set before them*, Heb. vi. 18.

4. The Hope of Glory gives Joy, on the account of the Excellency of its Nature, and the Eternity of its Duration. 'Tis a great Reward, a glorious Rest that is provided for the People of God. In the Description of the
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the new Jerusalem, 'tis said, that there shall no more Curse, and there shall be no Night there, Rev. xxii. 3, 5. There is fulness of Joy in Heaven; nothing wanting to complete the Felicity. God himself is the Inheritance of his Saints; that God, who is essential Goodness, and essential Love; who has always Treasures of Grace in store for his People, and is ever communicative of his Goodness. An inexhausted Fountain, sending forth continually plentiful Streams of Grace and Love. Besides, the Happiness of Heaven is eternal: There is not only fulness of Joy in the Presence of God; but at his right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore. This is a Consideration which greatly supports the Believer in every Tryal and Affliction. *We faint not*, saith the Apostle Paul, *for our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are temporal; but the Things which are not seen are eternal*, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18. In the midst of the Changes and Uncertainties of this Life, we may rejoice in Hope of an unchangeable Happiness; in hope of being admitted, in a little time, into the immediate Presence of God; *with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.*

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let us heartily endeavour after a real Interest in the Glory of God. And to this end, let us *set our Affections on Things above, and not on Things that are on the Earth.* And let us *by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality.* An earthly minded Man may flatter himself with hopes of Heaven, but he will find himself disappointed: He will be told, at the Day of Judgment, *that he has had his Reward.*

Let us not only be careful to love God above all Things; but let us often pray with the *Psalmist*, that *he would lift up the Light of his Countenance upon us*, and give us a Sense of his Favour. The Impressions of God's Love upon our Souls, will not only fill us with Hope, but be the best Evidence of our Interest in the Glory of God. This is agreeable to the Reasoning of the Apostle *Paul*, in one of the Verses following our Text; *v. 5. Hope maketh not ashamed.* [*i. e.* is built upon a solid Foundation, and will not deceive us.] *because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

2. Let those who have solid Ground of Hope in the Glory of God, remember to rejoice in their Interest in heavenly Things.
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Shall the Sons of Glory spend all their Joy upon the Gifts of Providence! they ought to be thankful for the Comforts and Enjoyments of this Life; but they have Treasures above, Treasures of Glory, which much better deserve their Joy. All earthly Joy is transitory and vanishing; the Foundation is unstable as the Wind: But the Joy that takes its Rise from the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, is solid and lasting, and is the great Support of a Christian, when all earthly Joys *make themselves wings and flee away.*

Let us accustom our selves to meditate on Things above. If we seldom think of Heaven, we cannot expect to be always deriving Joy from thence. If the Thoughts of Heaven were more familiar to us, we should have less Comfort and Satisfaction in the Things of this World, and more abundant Joy in our Interest in the Happiness of the World to come.

The Gospel does not invite us to rejoice in *Corn, and Wine, and Oil.* We are not to glory in the Prospect of an earthly Felicity, which was the great Hope of the *Jews* of old. The Hope and Reward of *Christians* is *everlasting Life.* This is the glorious Hope that the Gospel sets before us. *The Hope that is laid up in Heaven for us.* The *Jews* were encourag'd with the Promise of *goodly Cities which they builded not, and of Vine.*

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Vineyards, and Olive-Trees which they planted not. Christians are encouraged with the Promise of an heavenly Paradise; and of a City that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Let us go on joyfully in our Christian Course, having our Faces Sion-ward: And let nothing move us away from the Hope of the Gospel.

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S E R M O N II.

Joy in Tribulations.

R O M. V. 3.

*And not only so, but we glory in
Tribulations also.*

CH R I S T I A N S do not only rejoice in the Hope that is set before them, but in the Troubles that befall them for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. If Sufferings for the Name of God, had not furnished the Primitive Christians with real Matter of Joy, the severe Persecutions which pursued them from Place to Place, wou'd have discouraged them very much, and in all probability, have put a stop to the farther Progress of the Gospel. But they had a quite contrary Effect; the *Apostles* and their Followers being *exceeding joyful in all their Tribulations*.

The *Jews* made their boast of Circumcision and the Law: The Primitive Christi-

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ans gloried in their Sufferings for the Gospel. *They bore in their Bodies the Marks of the Lord Jesus*, which they esteemed as much more honourable than Circumcision. The *Jewish Church* could seldom, with any good Grace, make their boast of Tribulations for the Honour of God and their Law. Their History furnishes but very few Instances of this kind; whereas the History of the Apostolick, as well as succeeding Ages, is full of Relations of the Sufferings of Christians for the sake of the Gospel. They can therefore Glory in Tribulations above the *Jews*.

I. Tho' my Text does not directly lead me to consider the History of the *Jewish Church*, with relation to the Point of suffering Persecution for the sake of Religion; yet it will not be altogether amiss, and may be of use to us to consider this Matter a little carefully. When I have dispatch'd this I will consider,

II. The Scripture Account of the Sufferings of the *Apostles* and their Followers for the sake of the Gospel.

III. I will shew that Sufferings for the Gospel, are real Matter of Glorifying or Joy.

I. I am to take a View of the History of the *Jewish Church*, with relation to the Point of Suffering Persecution for the sake of their Religion. We

We will go as far back as the time when they were in Bondage to the *Egyptians*, and consider whether their Oppositions were on the account of their Religion. The sacred History presents us, at first view, with the Reasons which induced *Pharaoh* to lay heavy Burthens upon them. He called a Counsel, and address'd himself to them in the following manner; *Behold*, says he, *the People of the Children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply; and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our Enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the Land. Therefore they did set over them Task-masters, to afflict them with their Burthens*, Exod. i. 9, 10, 11. 'Tis plain they did not suffer for Religion. The *Egyptians* were afraid of being overpower'd by them, they increas'd so prodigiously; and therefore they endeavoured to suppress them by diminishing their Numbers: When they found that the expedient fail'd of success, and that they multiplied, and grew the more, they increased their Burthens, and *Pharaoh* order'd the Midwives to kill all the Male Children that should hereafter be born unto them. This plainly shews that Religion was out of the Case, and that they suffered on a quite different account.

It must be observed indeed, that the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, Chap. xi. v. 26. calls the Oppressions which they underwent in *Egypt*, *the Reproach of Christ*: But they might be thus called, as being typical of the Sufferings of *Christ* and his Followers; and not because they were on the account of Religion, and borne particularly for their Faith in *Christ*. Or they might be called *the Reproach of Christ*, because the Children of *Israel*, as is highly probable, were styled *God's Christ*, Hab. iii. 13.

When *Pharaoh* pursued the Children of *Israel* with an armed Host, he did not do it because they were gone to offer Sacrifice to *the God of the Hebrews*, but because he was in Danger of losing their Service, *Exod.* xiv. 5. *And it was told the King of Egypt that the People fled: And the Heart of Pharaoh and his Servants was turned against the People, and they said, why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?*

The Children of *Israel* laboured under no Oppression all the Days of *Moses* and *Joshua*, except it be, that all the Carcasses of the Men of War that had murmured against God, fell in the Wilderness. The glorious Majesty of God was in the midst of them, conducting them to the promised Land, and driving out their Enemies from before them. But after the Death of *Joshua*,

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we find them *in the Hands of Spoilers that spoiled them, and in the Hands of their Enemies round about them.* But then they did not suffer for God and Religion, but for Idolatry and Rebellion against God. This was a new Generation that had no Regard for God. The Generation that had seen the Wonders of God in *Egypt* and the Wilderness, at *Jordan* and at *Jericho*, being all of them dead. *Judges ii. 8, 10, &c. Joshua the Servant of the Lord died, and also all that Generation were gathered unto their Fathers: And there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the Works which he had done for Israel. And the Children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim; and they forsook the Lord God of their Fathers, which brought them out of the Land of Egypt, and followed other Gods of the Gods of the People that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to Anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the Anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the Hands of Spoilers that spoiled them, &c.* God did not make Tryal of their Faith and Constancy in his Service, but punished them for their Iniquity: And their Neighbours treated them as Enemies, and reduced them to a state of Slavery, either because they had

taken Possession of their native Country, or in order to prevent their making any farther Conquests.

For the like Reasons, they were afterwards oppressed by the *Syrians*, Judges iii. 8. by the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, and *Amalekites*, v. 12, 13. by the *Canaanites*, Judges iv. 2. by the *Midianites*, Judges vi. 1, &c. and by the *Philistines* and *Ammonites*, Judges x. 6, 7.

The *Ammonites* expressly say, that the Reason why they took up Arms against the Children of *Israel*, and invaded the Land of *Canaan*, was in order to recover the Lands which they had taken from them, *Judges* xi. 12, 13. *Jephtha* sent Messengers unto the King of the Children of *Ammon*, saying, what hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my Land? The King of the Children of *Ammon* answered unto the Messengers of *Jephtha*, because *Israel* took away my Land, when they came up out of *Egypt*, from *Arnon* even unto *Jabbok*, and unto *Jordan*: Now therefore restore those Lands again peaceably.

In the Days of *Jehu* King of *Israel*, *Hazael* King of *Syria* smote them in all their Coasts, 2 *Kings* x. 32. And in the Days of *Jehoahaz*, they were under Oppression to *Hazael* and *Benhadad* the Son of *Hazael*, 2 *Kings* xiii. 3, 4. But this was no Persecution for Conscience sake; for they were become

become a very wicked and idolatrous People, worshiping *Jeroboam's* Calves, instead of the God of *Israel*: And therefore he deliver'd them up into the *Hands* of the Kings of *Syria*, who, 'tis probable, took up Arms against them, to revenge an old Quarrel. For *Benhadad* is as much as the Son of *Hadad*; which *Hadad* was of the King's Seed in *Edom*, 1 Kings xi. 14. and fled to *Egypt*, when *David* subdued the Country of the *Edomites*, and when *Joab*, the Captain of his Host, destroyed all their Males for six Months together, v. 15, 16, 17. This *Hadad* gave *Solomon* a great deal of trouble in the latter end of his Reign: But not being able to establish himself in his Kingdom of *Edm*, 'tis not unlikely that he obtained the Government of *Syria*.

Not many Years after, *Israel* was carried away Captive into *Assyria*, but not on the account of Religion; for they were become as great Idolaters as any of their Neighbours. *They went after the Heathen that were round about them, and they left all the Commandments of the Lord their God, and worshiped all the Host of Heaven, and served Baal: Therefore the Lord was angry with them, and removed them out of his sight.* And the King of *Assyria* carried them into Captivity, because their King had broke Covenants with him, and form'd a Conspiracy against him, 2 Kings xvii.

Some Years after, *Judah* was carried away Captive to *Babylon*, and their Temple and City were destroyed; but not because they worship'd the God of *Israel*. For they had gone after other Gods to serve them, and to worship them, and had provoked the Lord to Anger with the works of their Hands, and wou'd not be reclaimed, tho' God sent his Prophets to them early and late; particularly *Jeremiah*, who constantly called upon them, and exhorted them to repent, that so they might escape impending Wrath. Therefore God sold them into the Hands of the King of *Babylon*, who carried them into Captivity, because their King had broke Covenant with him; particularly *Jehoiakim*, who became his Servant, and after three Years rebelled against him. 2 *Kings* xxiv. and made a Confederacy with the King of *Egypt*, in Opposition to him; and *Zedekiah*, who tho' he had sworn Fidelity to him, in the Name of the Lord his God, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 13. broke his Oath, and making a Confederacy with the King of *Egypt*, rebelled against him. He rebelled against him, saith God by his Prophet, in sending his Embassadors into *Egypt*, that they might give him Horses, and much People. Shall he prosper, shall he escape that doth such things? Or shall he break the Covenant and be delivered? *Ezek.* xvii. 15. 'Tis plain that *Zedekiah's* Treachery drew on

on him the War which ended in his Ruin, and in the Ruin of all *Judah* and *Jerusalem* with him, in the calamitous Destruction in which both were involved.

Before this general Captivity, *Nebuchadnezzar* had carried great numbers of the People to *Babylon*; some time after their coming there, Proclamation was made by Order of the King, commanding all People, Nations, and Languages, upon a Signal given, to fall down and worship an Image which *Nebuchadnezzar* had set up, on pain of being cast into the midst of a burning fiery Furnace. It does not plainly appear in *Daniel's* account of this Matter, how the Generality of the *Jews* behaved on this occasion: But we do not find that any were accused of disobeying the King's Command, excepting *Shadrack*, *Mesheck*, and *Abednego*, who adhered with great Constancy to their Religion; and against whom *Nebuchadnezzar's* Decree was put in Execution in the severest manner.

Some Years after, a Decree was obtained of *Darius*, whereby it was enacted, that whosoever should ask a Petition of any God or Man within thirty Days, excepting of the King, shou'd be cast into the Den of Lions, *Dan. vi.* But this Decree was the effect of Envy, on the account of *Daniel's* superior Authority, and not of any particular Zeal against the Religion of the *Jews*: And we
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do not find that it was put in Execution against any, excepting *Daniel*, against whom it seems to have been entirely level'd.

After the Return of the Captivity, the *Jews* set about the rebuilding of their Temple; but they were oppos'd herein by their Neighbours the *Samaritans*, who did all they could to distress them. I think this cannot well be called a Persecution for the following Reasons.

1. They are said to hinder the Work, because *Zerubbabel*, and the rest of the *Elders of Israel* refused to admit them to join with them in Building the Temple. *They said, let us build with you, for we seek your God, as ye do, and we do Sacrifice unto him.* But Answer was made, *You have nothing to do with us, to build an House unto our God. — Then the People of the Land weakned the Hands of the People of Judah, and troubled them in Building,* *Ezra iv.*

2. 'Tis highly probable that the *Samaritans* gave the *Jews* all this trouble, because they were oblig'd both by *Cyrus*, and *Darius*, to pay Tribute towards the rebuilding of the Temple, and the supplying them with Sacrifices. *Darius's* Decree is express'd at large in the Book of *Ezra vi. 8, 9, &c.* " This, says a learned Historian, was a matter of great Regret, and Heart-burning to " the *Samaritans*; and was, in Truth, the " Source, and the true original Reason of " all

“ all the Oppositions which they made a-
 “ gainst them; for they thought it an In-
 “ dignity upon them to be forced to pay
 “ their Tribute to the *Jews* *.

3. The Accusation that was drawn up against them by the *Samaritans*, and sent to the *Persian* Court, charges them only with rebellious Principles and Practices. *Be it known unto the King, say they, that the Jews which came up from thee to us, are come to Jerusalem building the rebellious and the bad City, and have set up the Walls thereof, and joined the Foundations. Be it known now unto the King, that if this City be builded, and the Walls set up again, then will they not pay Toll, Tribute, and Custom, and so thou shalt endamage the Revenue of the Kings, Ezra iv. 12, 13, &c.*

The King, in Return to their Letter, orders a stop to be put to the building of the City and Temple, and assigns the Reason of the Prohibition in the following words; *I commanded, and search has been made [in the Records of the Kingdom] and it is found that this City of old Time hath made Insurrections against Kings, and that Rebellions and Seditions have been made therein, v. 19.* You see, Religion seems to have been quite out of the Question: It does not appear that the *Samaritans* were troublesome to them, or that the rebuilding of the City and Temple

* Prid. Connec. Part I. p. 193, 194.

was intended on the account of their Religion. *

When the *Jews* had leave to return from their Captivity, a great many of them embraced the Opportunity; but great Numbers staid behind, being unwilling to leave their Possessions, and undertake so long and hazardous a Journey. They enjoyed a quiet and peaceable Settlement for several Years; but at last were in the greatest Danger of being utterly destroyed. *Haman*, a Man in great Favour with the *Persian* King, obtained of him a Decree, commanding all the Governors of his Provinces *to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little Children and Women, in one Day, and to take the Spoil of them for a Prey*, Esther iii. 13. That which first put *Haman* upon forming this execrable Design, was an Affront which had been put upon him by *Mordecai*, a *Jew* of some Note in that Country. In order to satisfy his Revenge, he resolved not only to destroy *Mordecai*, but also his whole Nation with him, both them that remained of the Captivity, and them that were returned to

* Dr. *Prideaux* observes that the King that now reigned, had been a chief Leader of the Sect of the Magians, against whom the *Jews* were in the utmost Opposition in Point of Religion; and therefore he thinks that the Aversion that he had to them on this Account, further'd this Decree against them. *Prid. Connec.* Part I. p. 174.

their

their own Land again. This was a severe Revenge for the Affront of one Man.

But 'tis to be observed, that *Haman* was an *Amalekite*, and there had been an ancient national Grudge between the *Jews* and the *Amalekites*. *Amalek* was the first that drew the Sword against *Israel* without any Provocation, and would have stop'd their Passage in the Wilderness, and hinder'd their Settlement in *Canaan*, *Exod. xvii. 8*. For which unprovoked Assault, the God of *Israel* devoted them to Destruction, putting them in the same Case with the seven Nations, which were designed to be given as a Prey to his People; *Write it*, says he, *for a Memorial in a Book, for I will utterly blot out the Name of Amalek from under Heaven, v. 13*. This sentence was afterwards renewed, and the People charg'd not to forget it, *Deut. xxv. 17, 18, 19*. *Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, — Therefore it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have given thee rest from all thine Enemies round about, in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for an Inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the Remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven: Thou shalt not forget it.* In the Days of *Saul*, Orders were given to put the Sentence in Execution, *1 Sam. xv. 2, 3*. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember what Amalek did to Israel. — Now go, and smite*

smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both Man and Woman, Infant and Suckling, Ox and Sheep, Camel and Ass. Saul executed the Sentence only in Part, and therefore God rejected him from being King over *Israel*, v. 26.

Thus a Foundation was laid for an utter Enmity between the *Israelites*, and the *Amalekites*; which, as is reasonable to suppose, was the main Source of *Haman's* cruel Design of extirpating the whole Race of *Israel*. Tho' it ought not to be overlook'd, that he insinuated to the King, that there was a certain People scattered abroad, and dispersed among the People, in all the Provinces of his Kingdom, who had Laws of their own different from all People, and who did not keep the King's Laws, to the great Disturbance of his Affairs, *Esther* iii. 8. This was a very artful Charge, and, no doubt, contributed very much to the procuring the severe Decree that was issued out against them.

A few Years after this, *Nehemiah* obtained a Commission from the King of *Persia*, empowering him to repair the Walls, and set up the Gates of *Jerusalem*. But he was strenuously opposed, particularly by *Sanballat* a *Moabite*, * and *Tobias* an *Ammonite*;

* He is called an *Haronite*, from *Haronaim*, a City in the Land of *Moab*.

who

who did all they could to distress the *Jews*, and to prevent their growing Prosperity. But whether their Religion, which was so different from that of all other Nations, provoked their Neighbours to obstruct every thing that was designed for their Good, is a Question. Other Reasons may be assigned as the principal Grounds of the Quarrel.

As to *Sanballat* their greatest Enemy, and *Tobias* a zealous Confederate with him, they were, as I have already observed, the one a *Moabite*, and the other an *Ammonite*. Now, tis not unlikely, as in the Case of *Haman*, that these Men might bear a national Hatred to all that were of the Race of *Israel*, on the account of an ancient Quarrel. The *Moabites* invited *Balaam* to come from the Eastern Countries, and curse the *Israelites*: And the *Ammonites* had no Compassion on them, when they were distressed in the Wilderness; and therefore God commanded his People to avoid all Affinity with them, and to shew no Love to them, *Deut. xxiii. 3, 4, 6.* An *Ammonite*, or *Moabite*, shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth Generation shall they not enter into the Congregation of the Lord for ever. Because they met you not with Bread and with Water in the Way, when ye came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against thee *Balaam* the Son
of

of Beor of Peshor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Thou shalt not seek their Peace, nor their Prosperity all thy Days for ever. 'Tis probable that Sanballat and Tobias did all they could to revenge the Quarrel of their Countrymen.

Another Reason why the *Israelites* met with so much Disturbance from their Neighbours, when they returned to their own Country again, was, as the *learned Historian* I mentioned before observes, because of their Lands. “ For, says he, during the
 “ Time that the *Jews* were in Captivity,
 “ these Nations [the *Ammonites*, the *Moa-*
 “ *bites*, the *Samaritans*, and other neigh-
 “ bouring Nations] having seiz'd their
 “ Lands, were forced to restore them on
 “ their Return: For which Reason they did
 “ all they could to oppose their Resettle-
 “ ment, hoping that if they could be kept
 “ low, they might find an Opportunity, some
 “ time or other, of resuming again the Prey
 “ they had lost. *

Hitherto we have had no clear account of any Hardships that the *Jews* underwent for the sake of their Religion, unless it be what is related concerning *Daniel* and the *three Children*. But above two hundred Years after this, we have an account of a severe Persecution that was set on Foot against all the *Jews* that liv'd in *Egypt*. The

* Prid. Connec. Part I. p. 365, 366.

King of *Egypt*, it seems, having visited *Jerusalem*, and offered Sacrifices at the Temple, would have pressed into the most sacred Recesses thereof, even into the Sanctuary it self; which the *Priests* and *Levites*, and all the People endeavour'd to prevent. This so enraged the King, that upon his return to *Egypt*, he published a Decree forbidding all that did not sacrifice to his Gods, to come into his Presence, or so much as enter in at the Gates of his Palace. And by another Decree deprived the *Jews* of their antient Privileges; ordaining, at the same time, that as many of the *Jews* as would sacrifice unto his Gods, should have all their Privileges continued to them. After this, taking a fresh occasion to vent his Wrath upon them, he order'd all the *Jews* that were in *Egypt*, to be bound in Chains, and exposed to be destroyed by his Elephants; but they escaped the intended Destruction, the Elephants taking no notice of them, but turning all their Fury upon the Spectators.* It must be observ'd, that this account is doubtless in part romantick.

The *Jews* were a People very much dispers'd abroad in foreign Countries, and were generally hated by the *Heathens* among whom they liv'd; partly by Reason of the difference of their Religion, and part-

* 3 Maccab. Cap. 2, 3, 4, 5. & Prid. Connec. Part II. p. 108, 109, 110.

ly because of the Hatred they bore to Men of all other Nations, thinking it unlawful to converse with them, and a Pollution so much as to touch them. On this latter Account especially, all other Nations were disposed to treat them as declared Enemies to all Mankind. But we do not hear of any great Hardships they suffered on the account of their Religion, till about one hundred and sixty eight Years before Christ; before which time, many of them had been guilty of great Impiety. The main particulars of the History of these Matters, are as follow.

About an hundred and seventy five Years before Christ, the High-Priesthood was set to Sale, and disposed of to the highest Bidder, by the King of *Persia*. By this means, Intruders got the Possession of it by Force of Arms, and becoming Apostates from the true Religion, initiated themselves in the Worship of the *Heathens*, and did all they cou'd to corrupt the People, especially the Youth; instructing them in the Idolatrous Customs and Usages of the *Greeks*, and teaching them to despise the Religion and Manners of their Fore-fathers. This wicked Design succeeded so far, that the Service of the Temple became neglected, both Priests and People apostatizing from the Worship and Service of the God of *Israel*, and joining with the Heathens, in
their

their unlawful Pleasures and Idolatrous Customs. * This was the greatest Impiety and Defection that the *Jews* had been guilty of since their Return from *Babylon*, and brought great Desolation upon them.

Particularly, a few Years after this, “ the
“ King of *Persia* issued out a Decree, that
“ all Nations within his Dominions, leav-
“ ing their former Rites and Usages,
“ should conform to the Religion of the
“ King, and worship the same God, and
“ in the same Manner as he did; which, al-
“ tho’ couch’d in general Terms, was le-
“ vell’d mainly against the *Jews*— His
“ Design was to cut off all the *Jews* where-
“ ever they were within his Reach, that
“ would not conform to his Decree, by
“ apostatizing from their God, and his Law;
“ that so he might, as far as in him lay,
“ extinguish both the Jewish Religion, and
“ the Jewish Name and Nation at the same
“ time. And for the more effectual exe-
“ cuting this Decree, he sent Overseers in-
“ to all the Provinces of his Empire, to see
“ to the Observance of it, and to instruct
“ the People in all the Rites, which they
“ were to conform to.

“ On one of these Overseers coming to
“ *Jerusalem*, and there executing his Office,
“ all Sacrifices to the God of *Israel* were
“ made to cease, all the Observances of the

Maccab. iv. 10, 11, 12, &c.

“ Jewish Religion were suppressed, the
“ Temple it self was polluted, and made
“ unfit for God’s Worship; their Sabbaths
“ and Festivals were prophaned, their Chil-
“ dren forbidden to be circumcised, and
“ their Law, wherever it could be found,
“ was taken away or destroyed, and the
“ Ordinances which God commanded them
“ were wholly suppressed throughout the
“ Land; and every one was put to Death
“ that was discovered in any of those par-
“ ticulars to have acted against what the
“ King had decreed.

“ Having thus expel’d the Jewish Wor-
“ ship out of the Temple, they introduced
“ thither the Heathen in its stead, and
“ consecrated it to the Chief of their false
“ Gods; and having erected his Image on
“ one Part of the Altar of Burnt-offering
“ that stood in the Inner-Court of the Tem-
“ ple, on another Part of it, just before
“ that Image, they built another lesser Altar,
“ whereupon they sacrificed to him.

“ And whereas two Women were found
“ at *Jerusalem* to have circumcised their
“ Male Children, of which they had been
“ lately delivered, they hang’d those Chil-
“ dren about their Necks, and having led
“ them in this manner thro’ the City, cast
“ them headlong over the steepest Part of
“ the Walls; and also slew all those who
“ had been accessary with them in the Per-
“ formance

“formance of this forbidden Rite. And
 “with the same Severity they treated all
 “others, who were found in the Practice
 “of any one of their former religious U-
 “sages, contrary to what the King had
 “commanded. And the more to propa-
 “gate among the People that Heathen
 “Worship which was enjoined, and to
 “bring all to conform thereto, they did
 “set up Altars, Groves and Chapels of
 “Idols, in every City; and Officers were
 “sent to them, who on the Day of the
 “King’s Birth in every Month, forced all
 “to offer Sacrifices to the *Grecian* Gods,
 “and eat of the Flesh of Swine, and other
 “unclean Beasts then sacrificed to them*.

This was a severe Persecution, and a great many, both *Jews* and *Samaritans*, apostatizing from their Religion, conformed to the King’s Decree. Nevertheless, in those Times of Confusion and Apostacy, there were thousands of *Jews* that could not be prevail’d with, either by Promises or Threats, to forsake the Law of their God, and bow the Knee to *Baal*. They were zealous for the Law, and took up Arms in the Defence of it; and with great Valour and Constancy fought the Battles of *Israel* against all their Persecutors; and God was pleased to bless their Arms with wonderful Success.

* Prid. Connect. Part II. p. 176, 177, 178, 179.

I do not find that after this Struggle for their Religion, they met with any Disturbance in the Worship of the True God, from any of the Heathen Nations. Particularly in the Days of our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, they seem to have had no Apprehensions of Persecution from any Quarter, if they cou'd but make it appear that they were circumcised, and firmly attach'd to the Law of *Moses*. Nay, even the *Judaizing Christians* thought themselves safe on this account, and were therefore exceeding zealous for the Law, and very active to ingage the *Gentile* Converts to be circumcised. This we learn from the following Words of the *Apostle Paul*, Gal. vi. 12, 13. *As many as desire to make a fair Shew in the Flesh, they constrain them to be circumcised: only lest they should suffer Persecution for the Cross of Christ. For neither they themselves, who are circumcised, keep the Law; but desire to have them circumcised, that they may glory in their Flesh.*

Hitherto I have consider'd, whether the *Jews* were Sufferers in the Cause of Religion, in the Hardships that were brought upon them by People of different Nations, and different Religions. I will now enquire briefly, whether we have any Account of their persecuting one another.

'Tis reasonable to suppose that they did not vex and oppress one another on the
account

Account of Religion, in regard they had but one Altar where they were allowed to sacrifice to God. They were obliged to bring all their Sacrifices to the Tabernacle; and after the Service of the Tabernacle ceased, they were bound to repair to the Temple, and there present their Offerings before the Lord. Besides the confining of their Sacrifices to one Place; their Law oblig'd *all their Males to appear three times a Year before the Lord their God, in the Place which he should chuse*, Deut. xvi. 16. This was not only a Means of preserving the Belief of One God; but of promoting and maintaining a religious Union and Harmony amongst them.

'Twas not many Years, indeed, after the building of the Temple, that *Israel* separated themselves from *Judah*. And presently after their Separation, *Jeroboam*, to prevent their Re-union with the Children of *Judah*, by going up to do Sacrifice in the House of the Lord at *Jerusalem*, made two Calves of Gold, and said unto them, *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: Behold thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan*, 1 Kings xii. 28, 29. After he had set up these Idols in *Dan* and *Bethel*, he erected Altars in both Places, and offered Sacrifices upon them. But tho' *Jeroboam*

boam had set up separate Altars, contrary to the exprefs Command of God, I do not find that any Persecution did arise from thence, unless it be, that *Jeroboam* expell'd the *Priests* and *Levites* out of his Dominions, because they wou'd not serve his Impiety; and seized on the Cities and Lands which belonged unto the *Levites*, 2 Chron. xi. 13, 14. *And the Priests and the Levites that were in all Israel, resorted to Rehoboam out of all their Coasts. For the Levites left their Suburbs, and their Possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his Sons had cast them off from executing the Priest's Office unto the Lord.*

Some Years after the Return of the Captivity, *Sanballat* built a Temple upon Mount *Gerizim* in *Samaria*, and set up an Altar in opposition to that at the Temple at *Jerusalem*. The *Samaritans* had formerly worshiped the God of *Israel* only in Conjunction with other Gods: But after they had erected a Temple amongst them, they worshiped the true God alone, being fully instructed in the Laws of *Moses*. But tho' they worshiped the God of *Israel* in the same manner as at *Jerusalem*, they were a Society formed in opposition to the Church at *Jerusalem*, inasmuch as they would not allow *Jerusalem* to be the Place which God had chosen to put his Name there; but contended

tended that Mount *Gerizim* was the true Place of worship, *Joh. iv. 20.*

The *Jews* and *Samaritans* could never agree after this; but I do not find any Instance of the *Samaritans* persecuting the *Jews*, unless it be that they had a share in the severe Persecution which I have mentioned a little before. We are told that at that time, they generally apostatized from their Religion, and disclaimed all manner of Kindred with the *Jews*, calling them a wicked People: And 'tis not improbable that they were active in the Persecution. We find that many of the *Jews* fell away at the same time, and became the greatest Persecutors of their Brethren. The *Samaritans*, one would think, would not be more backward to the Work than they.

Tho' the *profess'd Jews* had only one Altar, * there were several *Sects* amongst them. But the *Sects* that were the most noted, and the most opposite to each other, were the *Pharisees*, and the *Sadducees*. But tho' they were of a long standing in the *Jewish* Church, I believe there are few Instances of their bearing hard upon each other, on the account of their different Sentiments in Religion. The *Pharisees* were zealous for the

* I have taken no notice of the Temple that was built in *Egypt*, for the Service of the *Jews* residing there. 1. Because it was built but about 149 Years before Christ. 2. Because the *Jews* of *Egypt* did acknowledge it to be only a Daughter Temple to that of *Jerusalem*. *Prid. Connec. Part II. p. 187.*

Traditions of their Elders, and had once, indeed, a Restraint laid upon them as to these Matters. We are told that one of their *High-Priests*, being a Favourer of the *Sadducees*, "abrogated all their traditionary Constitutions, and enjoin'd a Penalty upon all that should observe them."* And it appears that this Decree was severely executed for the space of thirty Years.† But the *Pharisees* might thank themselves for it, they being a busy and mutinous Sect, and giving great disturbance to the *High-Priests* that reign'd at this Time; which, in their turns, retaliated their Affronts in the manner I have mentioned.

Thus I have taken a short view of the History of the *Jews*, with relation to the Point of suffering Persecution for the sake of Religion; and it appears, that they have seldom borne their Testimony to the Truth, by suffering in the Cause of Religion. Their History of the Times preceding the Introduction of *Christianity*, cannot boast of many Martyrs. They neither suffered much from their *Heathen* Neighbours, nor from the *Samaritans*, nor from any of their own Sects on the account of Religion. I am afraid their greatest Sufferings on a religious Account are of a later Date, and have come from another Quarter. I am afraid they have often fallen a Sacrifice to *Christian Zeal*.

* Prid. Connect. Part II. p. 327.

† Ibid. p. 398.

That Spirit of Persecution which discovered it self in the Breasts of the two Disciples *James* and *John*, and which only waited for a Commission to destroy their Neighbours the *Samaritans*, for their Rudeness to their Lord and Master, (but met with a reasonable Rebuke) has raged with unrestrained Fury against the *Jews*, and made great Havock amongst them; *This is a Lamentation, and serves for a Lamentation.*

Tho' the *Jewish* Church, before the last Destruction of their Temple and Polity by the *Romans*, were seldom Sufferers in the Cause of Religion; the *Christian* Church, upon its first appearance in the World, was furiously assaulted by the *Zealots* of those Times, and exposed to the heat of a violent Persecution.

The Gospel, indeed, breaths nothing but Love and Meekness, Gentleness and Goodwill towards Men. *Our Lord* came into the World *not to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them.* This was the real Intention, and Design of his coming; and this is the natural Tendency of his Religion. But for all this, 'tis true that *he came not to send Peace, but a Sword.* Both *Jews* and *Greeks* were so prejudiced against the Gospel, the one expecting Power and Dominion, and the other seeking after Wisdom, that they rejected it with scorn, and opposed its Reception in the World in the most violent manner:

Manner; especially the *Jews*, who were the bitterest Enemies of *Christianity*. They persecuted *our Lord* himself, *the Author and Finisher of our Faith*, with implacable Rage, and never gave him Rest till they had persecuted him to his Grave. And he assured his *Disciples*, before he left the World, that they were to expect no better Treatment. *If they have persecuted me*, says he, *they will also persecute you*, Joh. xv. 20. And Mat. x. 25. *If they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his Household?*

Our Lord tells them in particular, what they were to expect, and what would be the Consequence of their preaching the Gospel, Mat. x. 17, 18, 21, 22. *Beware of Men, for they will deliver you up to the Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues. And ye shall be brought before Governors and Kings for my sake, for a Testimony against them and the Gentiles. And the [unbelieving] Brother shall deliver up the [Christian] Brother to Death, and the Father the Child: And the Children shall rise up against their Parents, and cause them to be put to Death. And ye shall be hated of all Men for my Name's sake.* Nay our Lord tells them, that the Persecutions they were to expect, would be set on Foot with a Pretence of Zeal for God and his Service. After he had told them that they would put them out of the
the

the Synagogues, he adds; *Yea, the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service, Joh. xvi. 2.* And, therefore, to be sure, such Zealots as the *Pharisees*, in particular, would be thought to be, would distinguish their Zeal, by committing the greatest Acts of Violence upon the *Christians*.

Let us now,

II. Take a brief Survey of the Scripture account of the Sufferings of the *Apostles* and their Followers for the sake of the Gospel. To be sure the History of their Sufferings, will be found to be agreeable to our Lord's Predictions; *These Things have I told you,* says he, (speaking of the Sufferings they were to expect for his sake) *that when the Time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them, Joh. xvi. 4.*

Our Lord sent unto the *Jews* Prophets, and wise Men, and Scribes; and some of them they killed and crucified, [stoning Stephen, Acts vii. 29. and cutting off James with the Sword, Acts xii. 2.] and some of them they scourged in their Synagogues, [as Peter and the other Apostles, Acts v. 40.] and persecuted them from City to City; [as Paul, and Barnabas, and Titus.] Peter and John were brought before the Council, because they preached through Jesus the Resurrection from the dead, Acts iv. This was
owing

owing to the Instigation of the *Sadducees*, who were as zealous as the *Pharisees* in persecuting the *Christians*. We find them afterward concurring with the *High Priest*, in a fresh Persecution of the *Apostles*: *Being filled with Indignation they laid their Hands on them, and put them into the common Prison*, Acts v. 17, 18.

Not long after this, the *Jewish Sanhedrim* raised a great Persecution against the Church which was at *Jerusalem*, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the Regions of *Judea* and *Samaria*, except the *Apostles*, Acts viii. 1.

'Twas then that *Saul made Havock of the Church, entering into every House, and haling Men and Women, committed them to Prison*, Acts viii. 3. About this Time, he went to *Damascus*, with Authority and Commission from the Chief Priests, to bring the *Disciples* which were there, bound to *Jerusalem*, to be punished, Acts xxii. 5. But he was not suffered to execute his Commission, God having design'd him for better Service. He was converted to the *Christian Faith* himself on his Way to *Damascus*: And instead of being any longer a Persecutor, he became himself one of the greatest Instances of suffering Persecution. That Zeal which he had displayed against the *Disciples of Christ*, was turn'd against himself. A few Years after his Conversion to *Christianity*,
the

the *Jews* which were at *Damascus*, laid in wait to kill him; but he made his escape to *Jerusalem*. He did not find a safe Retreat there; for speaking boldly in the Name of the *Lord Jesus*, and disputing against the *Grecian Jews*, they went about to slay him, *Acts ix. 24, 29.* These Attempts upon his Life, did not discourage him. He adhered stedfastly to the Faith. And, after the Example of his great Lord and Master, went about doing good. But every where the Rage of Men pursued him, and persecuted him from City to City. He was persecuted at *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, *Acts xiii. 50.* at *Iconium*, *Acts xiv. 5.* at *Lystra*, ver. 19. at *Philippi*, *Acts xvi. 23.* at *Thessalonica*, *Acts xvii. 5.* at *Berea*, ver. 13. at *Corinth*, *Acts xviii. 12.* at *Ephesus*, *Acts xix. 28, &c.* and at *Jerusalem*, *Acts xxi. 27, &c.* In his second *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, Ch. xi. ver. 23, &c. He gives us the Particulars of his Sufferings, *In Stripes above measure*, [*Acts xvi. 22, 23.*] *In Prisons more frequent*, [v. 24.] *In Deaths oft.* *Of the Jews five times receiv'd I forty Stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with Rods: Once was I stoned*, [*Acts xiv. 19.*] — *In Perils by my own Countrymen*, [*Acts xx. 3.*] *In Perils by the Heathen, in Perils in the City, — in Perils among false Brethren.* He says of the Apostles in general, that *God had set them forth the last, as it were appointed to Death, being made a Spectacle*

cle unto the World, and to Angels, and to Men, and accounted as the Filth of the World, and as the Off-scouring of all Things, 1 Cor. iv. 9. 13.

The Apostles were not the only Sufferers, the Churches which they planted being Partakers with them in their Tribulations for Christ's sake. I have already observ'd, that there was a great Persecution against the Church at *Jerusalem*: I will now add, that the Churches of *Macedonia* also suffered Persecution for the sake of the Gospel. The *Apostle* tells us, that *they had a great tryal of Affliction*, 2 Cor. viii. 2. The *Thessalonians*, in particular, were Sufferers in the Cause of Religion, as may be seen, *Acts xvii. 6, &c.* The Churches in *Judea* had set them an Example of Suffering, having *endured with Patience, a great Fight of Afflictions*, Heb. x. 32. and they followed their Example. The *Apostle Paul* bears them this Testimony, 1 *Thess. ii. 14.* *For the Brethren became Followers of the Churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: For ye also have suffered like things of your own Countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.* In following the Example of the Churches of *Judea*, they became a Pattern of suffering to all the Churches of *Macedonia*, according to the *Apostle*, 1 *Thess. i. 6, 7.* *Ye became Followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word, in much Affliction,*

Affliction, with Joy in the Holy Ghost: So that ye were Examples to all that believe in Macedonia.

The dispersed Converts, to whom the Apostle St. Peter directs his first *Epistle*, were Sufferers in the Cause of *Christianity*. They were in *Heaviness through manifold Temptations*, 1 Pet. i. 6. and exposed to *fiery Tryals*, and made *Partakers of Christ's Sufferings*, Ch. iv. 12, 13. And 'tis one main Design of the *Epistle* to encourage them to be stedfast in the Faith, notwithstanding their Tribulations for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.

St. John the Divine was banished for the Word of God, and for the Testimony of Jesus. And he tells the seven Churches of Asia, to whom he writes, that he was *their Brother and Companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ*, Rev. i. 9. This should seem to be a plain Intimation, that all these Churches either had, or did, at the Time of writing the *Vision*, suffer Persecution. Of the Church of Ephesus 'tis said, *thou hast born, and hast Patience, and for my Names sake hast laboured, and not fainted*, Ch. ii. 3. Concerning the Church of Smyrna, 'tis not only said that they have already suffered Persecution, but they are also forewarned of a fresh Persecution that is coming upon them, v. 9. *I know thy Works, and Tribulation,*
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and Poverty. Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: Behold the Devil shall cast some of you in Prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have Tribulation ten Days. Concerning the Church of Pergamos 'tis said, v. 13. *I know thy Works, where thou dwellest, even where Satan's Seat is: And thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my Faith, even in those Days wherein Antipas was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.* The Church of Thyatira is commended for Patience, v. 19. Lastly concerning the Church of Philadelphia 'tis said, Ch. iii. 8. *Thou hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name.* Their Constancy and Patience were so great in the midst of all their Sufferings for Christ, that they were promised the Favour of escaping the Persecutions that were about to fall upon the whole Christian World, v. 10. *Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, I will also keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth.*

Thus I have set before you a brief Survey of the Scripture History of the Sufferings of the *primitive Christians*. They were appointed to Sufferings, 1 Thess. iii. 3. And called hereunto, 1 Pet. ii. 21. and so are Christians of all succeeding Ages. 'Tis astonishing to think how much *Christian Blood* has

has been sacrificed to the bigotted Rage of cruel and ambitious Men! and we are still to expect to be made Partakers of Christ's Sufferings: But this ought not to discourage us in regard,

III. Tribulations for Christ's sake are real Matter of Glorifying and Joy.

This will appear if we consider the following Things.

1. That they are productive of many happy Fruits, that are of the greatest Consequence in the Christian Life. *Tribulation*, saith the *Apostle*, *worketh Patience*; gives the Christian Sufferer an Occasion of exercising this most excellent Virtue: And when he has exercised his Patience, by enduring with Constancy the fiery Tryal, he has the comfortable Experience of the prevailing Power and Influence of a great many excellent Graces in his Soul. His Love for God has been tryed, and is found to be sincere: His Faith also has undergone the Tryal, and is found to be true and saving. Being thus fully satisfied of the Sincerity of his Profession, he comforts himself with the joyful expectation of everlasting Life.

2. Tribulations for Christ's sake are real Matter of Glorifying, in regard they that suffer for his Name, are, for the most part, furnished with extraordinary Aids of the Spirit. Their Infirmities are sustained by the

Power of Christ. They are made strong for the Battle by his Grace, and are more than Conquerors. Whilst the Appearances without are dark and melancholy, they are filled with inward Joy and Consolation, which is a great over-balance to all their outward Discouragements, and inspires them with true *Christian* Fortitude and Patience.

The *Thessalonians* are said to have received the Word in much Affliction, with Joy of the Holy Ghost. 1 *Thess.* i. 6. Their outward Sufferings gave occasion to the Holy Ghost to work in them an extraordinary spiritual Joy. The *Apostle* tells the *Corinthians*, that as the Sufferings of Christ abounded in him, so his Consolation also abounded by Christ, 2 *Cor.* i. 5. And that they might not think that this was a peculiar Favour bestowed only on the *Apostles*, and Ministers of the first Rank in the Church, he adds for their Comfort, v. 7. *And our Hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are Partakers of the Sufferings, so shall ye be also of the Consolation.* Every sincere Christian shall receive Comfort from Christ, in Proportion to the greatness of his Sufferings for his sake.

3. Tribulations for Christ's sake are real Matter of Glorifying and Joy, in regard the Reward of suffering Persecution for his Name, will be unspeakably great in the World to come, *Mat.* v. 11, 12. *Blessed*
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are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your Reward in Heaven. They that are Partakers of the Sufferings of Christ, shall also be Partakers of his Glory, 1 Pet. iv. 13. Rejoice inasmuch as ye are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings; that when his Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding Joy. They that suffer with Christ, are in a peculiar Manner joint Heirs with Christ, and Partakers of his Glory, Rom. viii. 17. — joint Heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. As they, that die with him, shall also live with him; so they that suffer with him, shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. If we take up our Cross and follow Christ, we may promise our selves superior Dignity and Glory in Heaven. By suffering for him we shall obtain a better Resurrection, Heb. xi. 35.

That you may not think that the Joy I have been speaking of, is only in speculation, and that 'tis impossible to rejoice in Afflictions of any kind, *no Chastening for the present seeming to be joyous, but grievous*, Heb. xii. 11. After having observ'd that by Chastening here, is probably meant Afflictions that are common to Men, and not Sufferings in the Cause of Religion, which few

are Partakers of; I shall give you an Instance or two, of the great Influence that suffering Persecution for Conscience sake has in exciting real Joy in the Breasts of the Sufferers. When the *Apostles* had been beaten, by order of the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, for speaking in the Name of *Jesus*, 'tis said, *that they departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name*, Acts v. 41. *Paul and Silas*, after they had been severely beaten at *Philippi*, and whilst they were under close Confinement, sang Praises unto God, Acts xvi. 23. 25. I suppose they magnified God for their present Sufferings for his sake.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Are Tribulations for Christ's sake real Matter of Glorifying and Joy? then a Church may be possessed of outward Glory and Support, and yet not be in the most happy Circumstances. 'Tis, indeed, a Blessing to any Church, to have *Kings for their nursing Fathers*, and *Queens for their nursing Mothers*, if they have but Hearts to make a suitable Improvement of the Protection that is afforded them: But, for the most part, true Religion flourishes most, when its Professors are under a Cloud; when their Rulers frown upon them, and the Great revile them. The Name and Profession of Religion may take a larger

a larger spread, when encouraged by Men in Power : But alas ! outward Pomp, and worldly Emoluments, do too often introduce and establish a formal empty Profession, wholly void of the Life and Power of Religion. But very often, when the Churches are laid waste, as to outward Glory, and the Face of Things is much altered for the worse, and few have either Courage or Inclination to appear in the Cause of Religion, a true Spirit of Piety and Devotion prevails more, than in Times of Prosperity, when the Mask of Religion is fashionable, and all People make Pretensions to it.

2. If Tribulations for Conscience sake are real Matter of Joy, then whatever Hardships we may labour under on a Religious account, let us not repine, but rather rejoice. We enjoy, 'tis true, the favourable Protection of the Government ; we have Liberty to worship God in that Way which we apprehend to be most agreeable to his Word ; and 'tis at the Peril of any to disturb us : Yet we have not that Countenance shewn us, which different Sentiments would entitle us to. Besides, we are a Reproach of Men, and despised of the People. But tho' we are stigmatized with the opprobrious Name of *Schismatics*, if our Separation from the *established Church* is peaceable, and what, upon a sincere enquiry, we think our selves oblig'd to : And if our Conversations are

regular and circumspect, as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, we may rejoice *inasmuch as we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name.*

'Tis a real Happiness to suffer for Righteousness sake; and whosoever suffers, in any respect, on the account of any thing that is the result of sincere Enquiry, and full Conviction, whether it be in Doctrinal Points, or in Points of Worship, is really a Sufferer for Righteousness sake.

St. Paul was persecuted by the Zealots of his Time for *Heresy*, Acts xxiv. 14. *This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call Heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.* Christians have been as forward to charge one another with *Heresy*, as the Jews were to charge their whole Body with it. But whenever we lie under the Reproach of *Heresy*, if we can say with the Apostle Paul, *that we believe all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets*; and can add, not only so, but we believe all the Doctrines, which, upon a diligent and careful Enquiry, we find revealed in the *New Testament*; we may appeal from the severe and uncharitable Verdict of Men, to the Judgment Seat of Christ, who knows our Hearts: Not doubting but we shall have Praise of God, tho' we meet with nothing but Reproach and Contemp'

Men may value themselves on the account of their believing any Doctrine, that is commonly receiv'd as true, and thought to be of great Importance. And if, when any Opposition is made to it, they distinguish their Zeal in the Defence of it, they will certainly meet with suitable Encouragement and Applause. Whereas an honest Enquirer, who happens in some Points to dissent from the *receiv'd Doctrine*, must expect to meet with unkind Treatment from the World about him: His Enemies will insult him, and his Friends will slide from him. I am fully persuaded, that his sincere Endeavours to inform himself aright, and ready Submission to whatever appears to him to be true, will recommend him to the Divine Approbation; and that he has an undoubted Right to glory in Tribulations, even tho' he shou'd be mistaken.

S E R M O N I I I .

Joy in God.

R O M. V. II.

And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE *Jews* made their Boast of God. He had chosen them out of all the Nations of the Earth, to be a peculiar People to himself; and had enter'd into Covenant with them, and confirm'd it by Circumcision. And they thought that no uncircumcised Person wou'd be accepted of God, or have any peculiar Privileges confer'd upon him. There came certain Men from *Judea to Antioch, who taught the Brethren, and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*, Acts xv. 1. This Opinion had taken deep Root in their Minds, and very much prejudiced them against the *Gentile Christians,*

ans, who were admitted to equal Privileges with themselves in their Uncircumcision.

The Apostle endeavour'd to set this important Matter in a clear light, and to convince both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that Circumcision was not necessary to a Sinner's Justification and Acceptance with God. After having shewn the Impossibility of being justified by the Law, and the Necessity of Justification by Faith; he insists on it, that God is the God of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*. *Is he, says he, the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the Circumcision by Faith, and Uncircumcision through Faith, Rom. iii. 29, 30.* In the next Chapter, he shews that *Abraham* their Father was justified in Uncircumcision, and that he is the Father of all them that believe, tho' Uncircumcised, *v. 11. He received the Sign of Circumcision, a Seal of the Righteousness of the Faith which he had, yet being Uncircumcised, that he might be the Father of all them that believe, tho' they be not Circumcised, that Righteousness might be imputed to them also.* This being manifest, it clearly follows, *that Righteousness must be imputed to all that believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, v. 24. Gentile Christians* therefore, have a right to Glory in God. The *Jews* have hitherto
made

made their Boast of God, as his peculiar People: But now there are none who have so just a Right to glory in him as *Christians*. They have a Right to *Joy in God* THROUGH THEIR LORD JESUS CHRIST. In discoursing on these words I will,

I. Consider what Foundation the *Jews* had for Boasting in God as their God.

II. I will consider the Claim of *Gentile Christians* to an Interest in God.

III. I will endeavour to shew that an Interest in God is a solid Foundation of Glory and Joy.

I am to consider,

I. What Foundation the *Jews* had for Boasting in God as their God.

1. It is to be observed, that God made a Covenant with *Abraham* and his Seed after him, *Gen. xxvii. 7. I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy Seed after thee.* Circumcision was the Sign or Token of this Covenant. And it must be own'd that the *Jews* were the proper Descendants of *Abraham*, and bore the Badge of Circumcision. *Whose are the Fathers*, saith the Apostle, *Rom. ix. 5.*

But tho' they were *Abraham's* Seed after the Flesh, this alone did not intitle them to
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the Promises made to their Fathers. *Ishmael* was descended from *Abraham*, as well as *Isaac*; and yet the Blessings of the Covenant were confined to the Posterity of *Isaac*. In like manner, tho' *Esau* was *Isaac's* Son, as well as *Jacob*, the *Edomites*, the Posterity of *Esau*, were rejected; and the *Israelites*, the Descendants of *Jacob*, were received into Covenant. The *Jews* therefore, must have some better Plea, than this that they are the Seed of *Abraham*, to intitle them to the peculiar Favour and Friendship of God.

They will say they are *Israelites*, as indeed they are. *We are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises.* Rom. ix. 4. But tho' they are *Israelites after the Flesh*, even this will not intitle them to all the Blessings of the Covenants made with their Fathers. They cannot make their Boast of God purely on this account, and lay Claim to his special Favour and Protection. For we see that they are rejected from being a People; and yet surely God has fulfilled his Promises, which he so often renewed to their Fathers. Not, saith the Apostle, *as tho' the Word of God hath taken none Effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel*, Rom. ix. 6. They are indeed, *outwardly, according to the Flesh,*
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*by Circumcision the People of God: Behold Israel after the Flesh, 1 Cor. x. 18. ** But none are properly the Children of the Promise, and counted for that Seed, but they that are *of the Faith of Abraham, Gal. iii. 7.* And therefore the *Jews*, who were a rebellious stiff-necked People, tho' they were the Children of the Flesh, were not properly the Children of God.

Indeed, there was a peculiar Regard shewn them, as the proper Descendants of *Abraham*. The Apostle *Paul* calls them the *natural Branches*, whilst he stiles the *Gentiles wild Olive-Trees grafted in upon the cutting off of some of the Branches*: And charges them not to *boast against the Branches*, Rom. xi. 17, 18. He tells them, v. 24. *That they were cut out of the Olive-Tree, which is wild by Nature, and were grafted contrary to Nature into a good Olive-Tree.*

Salvation was first offer'd to the *Jews*, as being, by lineal Descent, the Seed of *Abraham*, and so the direct Heirs of the Promise. When *our Lord* sent forth his *Apostles*, he commanded them, saying, *go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any City of the Samaritans, enter ye not: But go rather to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel, Mat. x. 5, 6.* But notwithstanding this distinguishing Favour, they rejected Christ, and crucified the *Lord of Glory*; and

* See *Locke's Paraphrase* of the Text.

for their Unbelief were broken off, and the *Gentiles* called to be the People of God.

2. The *Jews* were God's People in a *National Sense*, his peculiar People. He often called them *his People*, when they were as little deserving of his Favour, as any of the Nations that were round about. *Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which are yet no Gods? But my People have changed their Glory for that which doth not profit*, Jerem. ii. 11. In this Sense the *Gentiles* were never the People of God.

But, tho' the *Israelites* were God's People, their Country his Land, *Psal.* lxxxv. 1. and the Throne of their Kings his Throne, *2 Chron.* ix. 8. he made choice of them, and separated them from all other People for the sake of their *Fathers*, and not for any Desert of theirs. *Deut.* iv. 37, 38. *Because he loved thy Fathers, therefore he chose their Seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight, with his mighty Power out of Egypt: To drive out Nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their Land for an Inheritance.* And so *Deut.* x. 15. *Only the Lord had a Delight in thy Fathers to love them; and he chose their Seed after them, even you above all People.*

God gave them the Land of *Canaan*, and became their Ruler and Defender, because
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of the Wickedness of the Nations, which he drove out before them, and because of the Covenant, which he had made with their *Fathers*, that he wou'd give it them for an everlasting Possession, and not on the account of any Righteousness of theirs, Deut. ix. 5, 6. *Not for thy Righteousness, or for the Uprightness of thine Heart, dost thou go to possess their Land: But for the Wickedness of those Nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee; and that he may perform the word, which the Lord swear unto thy Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good Land to possess it, for thy Righteousness: for thou art a stiff-necked People.* Moses tells them, v. 24. *That they had been rebellious against the Lord, from the Day that he knew them.*

Thus it appears plain, that tho' the *Israelites* were God's People, and enjoy'd many National Blessings and Privileges above all the People of the Earth, 'twas owing chiefly to the Covenant which he had made with their *Fathers*, and to the great Love that he had for them. They had no Desert of their own, being a most obstinate and rebellious People. What a sad Account is given of *Judah*, in the first of *Is. 2*, &c. *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth: For the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought*

brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me, &c.

I must observe,

3. That at the time of writing the *Epi-
stle* to the *Romans*, tho' some years before
the utter rejection of the *Jews*, in the final
Destruction of their Temple and Polity, it
shou'd seem, by what the *Apostle* says in the
eleventh Chapter, that they were in a great
measure cast off from being the People of
God, v. 15. *If the casting away of them
be the Reconciling of the World, &c.* v. 17.
If some of the Branches be broken off, &c.
v. 20. *Because of Unbelief they were broken
off*; besides several other Passages to the
same purpose. Our Lord's Prediction, there-
fore, seems to have been then in a great
measure accomplished; wherein he foretold
*that the Kingdom of God should be taken
from them, and given to a Nation bringing
forth the Fruits thereof*, Mat. xxi. 43. And
on this Account, the *Apostle* might mention
the Ground of glorying in the Text, as be-
come, in a great measure, peculiar to be-
lieving *Gentiles*, as it had formerly been
peculiar to the *Jews*.

I now proceed to consider,

II. The Claim of *Gentile Christians* to an
Interest in God.

While the *Gentiles* were without the
Knowledge of Christ, they were *Aliens from*
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the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World, Eph. ii.

12. But now they are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, v. 19.

More particularly,

1. God has called them to be his People. The *Jews*, through their Unbelief, have forfeited the Privileges of the Covenant of Peculiarity, and the believing *Gentiles* are become the chosen People of God. This is agreeable to the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, Ch. iv. v. 5. *Behold thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that know not thee shall run unto thee.*

The very Titles that were formerly given to the *Jewish* Nation, are now given to Christians in general, 2 *Pet.* ii. 9, 10. *Ye are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that ye shou'd shew forth the Praises of him, who hath called you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light: which in time past were not a People, but are now the People of God; which had not obtained Mercy, but now have obtained Mercy.*

The *Jews* were formerly an holy People unto the Lord their God; being chosen out to be a peculiar People above all Nations, to shew forth his Praise. In like manner,

ner, *Christians* are said to be an *holy Nation*. They are separated to God from all the *Idolatrous Nations* of the Earth, and are therefore called *Saints*. This Appellation of *Saints*, is not given to those only who are inwardly sanctified, but to *Christians* in general. Thus *St. Paul*, in the Prefaces of his Epistles, styles all the Members of the Churches, to whom they were directed, *Saints*; tho' many of them wanted the inward Sanctification of the Spirit. All *Christians*, by virtue of their Profession, are an holy People separated to the Service of God: And as the *Seed* of the *Jews* was an *holy Seed*, so is the *Seed* of *Christians*, 1 Cor. vii. 14.

2. Sincere *Christians* are the Children of the Promise made to *Abraham*. If we are really Believers in *Christ*, we are *Abraham's* Spiritual Seed, and more properly his Children, than the stiff-necked unbelieving *Jews*, his natural Descendants. Neither because they are the *Seed* of *Abraham*, are they all Children, Rom. ix. 7. They which are of Faith, the same are the Children of *Abraham*, Gal. iii. 7. And v. 29. If ye be *Christ's*, then are ye *Abraham's* Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise. And Chap. iv. v. 28. Now we, Brethren, as *Isaac* was, are the Children of the Promise. The *Jews*, by Reason of their Infidelity, are cast off from being a People; and the *Gentiles* having

attained to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith, are received into Favour, as being *Abraham's* Spiritual Seed; and enjoy all the Privileges belonging to the Christian Covenant; all the Blessings promised to *Abraham* and his Seed: *They partake of the Root and Fatness of the Olive-Tree.*

3. Christians are become the chosen People of God *for Christ's sake.* *We joy in God* THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. I have already observ'd, that the *Jews* were chosen of God for their *Fathers* sake, for the Love that he had for their *Fathers*; which Love was indeed so great, that, tho' the *Jews* were rejected for their Unbelief from being a People, the *Apostle Paul* says they are still beloved for the *Fathers* sake: And gives Encouragement to hope that they are not quite cast off, but will be again restored unto Favour, *Rom. xi. 28, 29.* But tho' *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* were greatly beloved of God, they were none of them so dear to him, as his own Son: And therefore 'tis a much greater Privilege to be loved of God, and chosen for his People for his Son's sake, than for the sake of those antient *Patriarchs.* The *Jews* enjoyed many Favours for their sakes; God dwelt amongst them, and they beheld his Glory, whilst the *Gentiles* were without God in the World. But 'tis their Glory, and their unspeakable

Privilege now, *that in Christ Jesus, they, who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ*, Eph. ii. 13. Christians have *access unto the Father through Jesus Christ*, v. 18. And as the *Shechinah*, or *Glory of the Lord* formerly dwelt amongst the *Jews*, having his Residence in the Sanctuary; so now *Christians* are become an *Habitation of God through the Spirit*: He dwells in them as in his Temple, v. 21, 22. So great is the Favour to which Christians are admitted for Christ's sake! They are God's peculiar People, by virtue of the Death and Intercession of his own Son, and beloved for his sake. If the *Jews* are still beloved for their *Fathers* sake, shall not *Christians* much more have a lasting Interest in God's Favour for his *Son's* sake?

I have now prov'd that God is indeed the God of the *Gentiles*: I have made it appear that they are become his People; that such of them as have their Hearts purified by Faith, are *Abraham's* Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise; and that they are brought nigh unto God, and admitted to special Favour for *Christ's* sake.

I proceed to shew,

III. That an Interest in God, is a solid Foundation of Glorifying and Joy. *Happy is that People that is in such a Case; yea happy is the People, whose God is the Lord.*

If any thing either in Heaven or in Earth, can give solid Joy, it must be an Interest in God especially. *Whom have I in Heaven, saith the Psalmist, but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee?* But more particularly,

1. Christians may well rejoice in God, through *Jesus Christ*, in regard he is the *Fountain of Mercy and Grace*. *Blessed be God, saith the Apostle, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort*, 2 Cor. i. 3. 'Tis owing to the Mercy of God, that Salvation is come unto the *Gentiles*. The Redemption of lost Sinners was his own gracious Design, and executed in Obedience to his Command.

That the Love and Mercy of *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* may be set in a clear Light, I will endeavour to represent, in a proper Order, the Scripture Account of the part, which he acted in the great Affair of our Redemption, and of the Power and Influence which he is pleased to exert, in the no less necessary Work of Sanctification.

The Birth of Christ was ushered in by the *Angels*, with a Song of Praise to God. They praised God and said, *Glory to God in the highest, on Earth Peace, and Good-will towards Men*, Luke ii. 14. Glory is justly ascribed to God for our Redemption by *Christ Jesus*. For, 1. He

1. He is styled, by way of Eminency, *God our Saviour*, on the Account of the Redemption which we have by *Jesus Christ*. Tit. iii. 4, 6. *After that the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour toward Man appeared, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. The blessed Jesus is deservedly styled our Saviour:* But 'tis worthy of our Observation, that *God our Saviour* appointed, and exalted him to this very Office. Acts v. 31. *Him [Jesus] hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and Forgiveness of sins.*

Our Lord *Jesus* came into the World to redeem us, being sent on this glorious Errand by the *Father*. And this Instance of the *Father's* Compassion for lost Sinners, greatly displayed his Love and Grace, 1 Joh. iv. 9, 10. *In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.* The Lord *Jesus* received his Commission from the *Father*, and executed his Will in Redeeming us. *He proceeded forth and came from God; neither came he of himself, but he sent him, Joh. viii. 42.* Whatever he did upon Earth, for the Benefit of lost

Sinners, he did it *in Faithfulness to God that appointed him*, Heb. iii. 2.

The glorious Message of Salvation, which the *Lord Jesus* published to the World, was sent by the *Father*. He received the Covenant of Peace from his Mouth. *Joh. xii. 49, 50. I have not spoken of my self, says he, but the Father which sent me; he gave me Commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his Commandment is Life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

We may observe by the way, that all the Messages that have at any time been dispatch'd to the World; all the Light, and all the Intimations of Grace and Mercy, that have ever been communicated to Mankind, have come from the *Father*, and been published by his express Order and Appointment. Thus the *Apostle* to the *Heb. i. 1, 2. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.*

When our Lord's *Prophetical Office* upon Earth was about to determine, he acknowledged that he had been employed in his *Father's Business*, *Joh. xvii. 4. I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do.*

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The Conclusion of his Life, painful to himself, but happy for the World, was in Consequence of the *determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God*, to which *our Lord* wholly conform'd himself in every stage of his Life, and particularly at the dismal Close of it; saying, in the midst of his Agony, *If this Cup must not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.* God so loved us, *that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, Rom. viii. 32. Our Lord laid down his Life for us, having received this Commandment of his Father, Joh. x. 18.

Thus 'tis plain, that *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases unto them.*

After *our Lord* rose from the dead, he gave a Commission to his *Apostles* to preach the Gospel to every Creature: and being ascended up into Heaven, where he sits at the right Hand of God, he sends down the *holy Spirit* into our Hearts, to make the Word become effectual for our Conversion: But still God is represented as the *original Fountain* of all the Blessings of the Gospel, 2 Cor. v. 17, 18. *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation.*

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The calling of People to the Faith of the Gospel, that they may be saved, is ascribed to *God the Father*. The Apostle *Paul* acknowledges, for his Part, that it was *God* that called him to the Faith of Christ, *Gal. i. 15, 16.* — *It pleased God, — who called me by his Grace, to reveal his Son in me.* — The *Ephesians* were called of *God*. *Eph. ii. 4—7.* *God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. — And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly Places in Christ Jesus: That in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindness towards us through Jesus Christ.* The *Colossians* were also called of him, *Colos. i. 12, 13.* *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light: Who hath delivered us from the power of Darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* And so were the *Thessalonians*, *2 Thes. ii. 13, 14.* *We are bound to give Thanks alway to God for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth: whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* I believe this

Work of calling People to the Faith of Christ, is generally ascribed to God the *Father*, tho' not always; for the *Romans* are said to be *the called of Jesus Christ*, Rom. i. 6.

We are *complete* in Christ. With him we have a suitable Provision of Grace, and all necessary Furniture for our Souls: But we are not only made Believers in Christ, by the blessed Influence of *God the Father*, as being the principal Father of every good and perfect Gift: But all the Advantages, which we have by Christ, are the happy Fruits of his free and unmerited Bounty, and are conveyed to us by his special Grace; such abundant Reason have we to glory in God. 1 Cor. i. 30. *Of him [viz. God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption, that according as it is written, he that gloryeth, let him glory in the Lord.*

As God calls us to the Faith of Christ, inclines us to believe in him, and intitles us to many great and glorious Privileges for his sake; so he carries on the Work of Grace and Sanctification in our Souls. This is manifest, in regard we are oblig'd to address him for the Aids of his Spirit, and to ascribe the Progress that we make in Faith and Holiness to his powerful Influence upon our Hearts and Lives. This the Apostle *Paul* did
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on the behalf of his *Philippians*, Phil. i. 3—6. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you always, in every Prayer of mine for you all, making Request with Joy. For your Fellowship in the Gospel, from the first Day until now: being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it to the Day of Jesus Christ.* The Apostle to the *Hebrews*, makes use of the following concluding *Benediction*, which is a full Proof of the Point in Hand. *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ; Heb. xiii. 20, 21.*

'Tis God that establishes us in Faith and Holiness; that supplies us with confirming Grace, and enables us to maintain our Ground against all the Assaults of our Spiritual Adversaries. *Eph. iii. 14. For this cause I bow my Knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward Man.* To the same purpose is the following Prayer of the Apostle *Peter*. *1 Pet. v. 10. The God of all Grace, who hath called us into his eternal Glory by Christ*
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Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

'Tis God who rewards the faithful Service of his People with everlasting Life. *Rom. vi. 23. The Gift of God is eternal Life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, says the same Apostle, — for the Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, Col. i. 3, 5.*

Thus, 'tis manifest, *that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Fountain of Mercy and Grace, the God of Peace and of Love. We shou'd always represent him to our selves, as abundant in Goodness and Mercy. This is the Name whereby he would be known. He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. God is the glorious Pattern and Example of Mercy. He is kind to the unthankful and the evil; and we are commanded by our Lord Jesus, to be merciful as our Father is merciful, Luke vi. 36. 'Tis God who forgives us all our Trespases, and we ought, therefore, to forgive one another. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you, Eph. iv. 32.*

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2. 'Tis matter of glorying in *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that *his Kingdom ruleth over all*, tho' he has exalted his Son to great Power and Dignity; *having given him a Name which is above every Name*: And tho' he hath put all things under his Feet, and given him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Eph. i. 22. Yet he has reserved to himself the supreme Dominion over the World. He is still the absolute Owner, and Disposer of all Things; *in whom we live, move, and have our Beings*; and therefore (which is a convincing Evidence of the Truth of our Assertion) we are oblig'd to consider him as the ultimate Object of all our Religious Addresses. In that Day, says our Lord, [*i. e.* after my Resurrection and Ascension] *ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you*, Joh. xvi. 23. We ought to bow our Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 14. and look for a supply of all our Wants from his Hands. He knows what we have need of, and can easily send us help from the *Mercy-seat*; and we are well assured of his readiness to assist us when we call upon him. If ye being evil, says our blessed Lord, *know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good Things to them that ask him?*

him? Mat. vii. 11. We have all needful Supplies of temporal and spiritual Blessings from his Hands. He is possessed of inexhausted Treasures: All our Springs are in him. *'Tis God who supplies all our need, according to his Riches in Glory, by Christ Jesus,* Phil. iv. 19.

As a farther Proof, that *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, is the supreme Governor of the World, the Sovereign Disposer of all Events, and the Giver of every good and perfect Gift; we are obliged to consider him as the ultimate Object of Praise and Thanksgiving; and, accordingly, ought to make our grateful Acknowledgments to him for all our Enjoyments, and for every favourable Turn of Providence; for his sparing Mercy, and preventing Grace; for extraordinary Mercies, and for common Favours. We must *give thanks always for all things unto God the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* Eph. v. 20. *Whatsoever, saith the Apostle, ye do in Word and Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving Thanks to God and the Father by him,* Col. iii. 17. *By him [Christ] we must offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually,* Heb. xiii. 15.

Nothing can be more evident, than that *the one God and Father of all, is above all, and through all, and in us all,* Eph. iv. 6. And therefore they have abundant Reason
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of Glorifying and Joy, who have an Interest in his Grace and Protection. If the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness of Almighty God do all unite to make us happy, we can never be in Circumstances truly miserable. We must expect Chastisements, whereof all are Partakers: But these are only Fatherly Rebukes, and will issue in our greater Good. We must look for Tryals, and Disappointments in this World: But our God can *make all things work together for our good*. If in the midst of Troubles we are found faithful, we shall certainly see the Salvation of the Lord: In the mean time, he will support and comfort us: *Blessed be God*, saith the Apostle, *even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who comforteth us in all our Tribulations*, and will prepare us, by all our Afflictions, for the enjoyment of eternal Rest above. *Giving Thanks*, saith the same Apostle, *unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, Col. i. 12.

The Providence of God is a watchful, all-sufficient Guard about his People. *The Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Prayers. They cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their Troubles. The Lord redeemeth the Soul of his Servant, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate*, Psal. xxxiv. 15, 17, 22. Wicked Men may glory

glory in their Wisdom, and Power, and Riches; but a righteous Man will glory in the Favour and Protection of Almighty God. *For thus saith the Lord, let not the Wise Man glory in his Wisdom, nor let the Mighty Man glory in his Might; let not the Rich Man glory in his Riches; but let him, that gloryeth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth Loving-kindness, and Judgment, and Righteousness in the Earth: For in these things I delight, saith the Lord,* Jerem. ix. 23, 24.

Indeed, we often see the Wicked Prosperous, and the Righteous in great Affliction. This has frequently puzzled the wisest and the best of Men: But the Difficulty was never harder to be resolved, than when such things happened in the Time of the Law: The peculiar Sanctions whereof were of a temporal nature; *i. e.* Promises of Worldly Prosperity to those that kept it, and Threatnings of outward Misery and Calamity to those that broke it. The divine Penman of the lxxiii^d Psalm was greatly perplex'd with the promiscuous Dispensation of things here below. *As for me, says he, my Foot had well nigh slipt, for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the Prosperity of the Wicked, v. 2.* And he tells us, *v. 14. that he had been plagued all the Day long, and chastened every Morning:*

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And yet, upon serious Consideration and Enquiry, he was fully convinced, *that Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of God's Throne, and that Mercy and Truth go before his Face.* He breaks forth in the following rapturous Expressions; *truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean Heart, v. 1.* And he acknowledges, *v. 25.* that his Happiness consists in the Divine Favour and Protection; saying, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth, that I desire, besides thee.* He wholly relied on God for Comfort and Support, and was fully satisfied with his Favour alone.

Now, if in the Time of the Law, Pious Men were fully convinced, that God is not only Just, but singularly Good to all his faithful People, notwithstanding that the Wicked were often Prosperous, and the Righteous exposed to great Calamities; Christians, who have not such clear and express Promises of temporal Felicity, and who are chiefly encouraged in the Practice of Virtue, with the Promises of a future and a better Life, may be fully satisfied of the Justice, and Mercy, and Faithfulness of God in the Government of the World; and may glory in the share that they have, in the Care and Bounty of his Providence. *All the Paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth,*
unto

unto such as keep his Covenant and his Testimonies, Psal. xxv. 10.

3. 'Tis matter of Glorifying in God through Christ, that he will not only be his People's God, and Guide in this World; but their exceeding great Reward in the World to come. At the Day of Judgment, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be the compleat Happiness of his Saints; their everlasting Portion and Felicity. This appears from 1 Cor. xv. 24, 27, 28. where the Apostle, speaking of Christ's coming to Judgment, has the following Observations, *Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power. For he [God, even the Father] hath put all things under his Feet: But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God, even the Father] is excepted, who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son himself also be subject to him, [to God, even the Father] that put all things under him, that God [who put all things under him, and to whom the Son himself is become subject] may be all in all.**

At the End of the Christian Dispensation;

* Christ, [at the Day of Judgment] will deliver up his Kingdom to the Father, that He may be all in all. Medt, Lib. 3. p. 573.

God will neither govern, nor dispense his Favours, by the intervention of his Son. He will then be, both our immediate Governor, and immediate Happiness. He will have no Vicegerent; all our Obedience must center in him, and from him we must derive our Happiness. Believers are *Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ*, and will partake of their Saviour's Felicity, *by living and reigning with him*, 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. We now receive a fulness of Grace from the Son; at the Day of Judgment we must receive a fulness of Glory from the Father. He must be *all in all*. And hereby, we shall not need to desire any other Happiness than the immediate Presence, and full Enjoyment of God. *In his Presence is fulness of Joy*. He is an all-sufficient Good; there can be nothing wanting to complete our Happiness. Perfect Goodness, and Essential Love will abundantly satisfy us. We now live on the Streams of his Bounty; then we shall drink our fill at the Fountain Head. Now the Mercies, which we derive from him, have an alloy of Sorrow and Affliction; but then all our Joys will be pure and unmix'd. We shall see no signs of Anger; no Cloud interposing between us and the Light of God's Countenance: 'Twill always appear to us in its Glory, and we shall be always ravished with the sight thereof. We shall be fully convinced, by happy Experience, that

that with God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. We shall find that he is not only unchangeable, but eternal. *He is the same, and his Tears shall not fail; He only hath immortality:* And when both Heart and Strength fail us, he will be the Strength of our Heart, and our Portion for ever, *Psal. lxxiii. 26.*

I hope it now plainly appears, that they have abundant Reason to glory in *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who have an Interest in his Favour: In regard he is the *Father of Mercies*, the *God of Providence*, and the *unchangeable everlasting Happiness of his Saints.*

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let us all endeavour to obtain the Favour and Friendship of the blessed God: 'Tis an Happiness we may all of us attain to. God has no Aversion to it; but on the contrary, has manifested the greatest Disposition to be at Peace with us. *He was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing to them their Trespases, and hath committed unto Men the Ministry of Reconciliation.* Let us all therefore, be intreated to be reconciled unto God. Let us become holy in Heart and Life; that being Partakers of the Divine Nature, he may not be ashamed to be called

our God. Whilst we remain ungodly, we cannot hope for any share in his Friendship. *For he is not a God that hath Pleasure in Wickedness, neither shall Evil dwell with him: The Foolish shall not stand in his sight, he hateth all the workers of Iniquity, Ps. v. 4, 5.* There is no way of making God our Friend, but by keeping his Commandments. If we love him, he also will love us; *and this is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments.*

2. Let such of us, as have a saving Interest in the Favour of God, endeavour to secure it by continuing stedfast in Faith and Holiness. And in order to make us the more watchful over our Hearts and Lives, let us consider, that the *Jews*, the natural Branches, were broken off because of Unbelief: And surely, as the *Apostle* goes on to argue, *if God spared not the natural Branches*, we have Reason to fear that he will not spare us, *if we continue not in his Goodness.* We *stand by Faith*: But if we indulge Unbelief, and prove Disobedient, we, who were grafted into a good Olive-Tree contrary to Nature, shall be cut off at last, as were the natural Branches.

S E R M O N I V .

Joy in Christ Jesus.

P H I L I P . I I I . 3 .

— *And Rejoice in Christ Jesus.*

TH E *Jews* valued themselves much on the Account of their External Privileges, and particularly, because they were the Seed of *Abraham*. And therefore, the *Baptist* speaks thus to them; *Bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance; and think it not sufficient to say within your selves, we have Abraham for our Father, Mat. iii. 8, 9.* They rested in their Privileges and outward Performances; and thought, that they were the only Favourites of Heaven. *Behold*, says the *Apostle*, *thou art called a Jew, and restest in the Law, and makest thy Boast of God, Rom. ii. 17.*

The *Apostle*, in the Beginning of this Chapter, sets himself to expose the Foundation

dation of their Glorifying. He compares the *Jewish*, and the *Christian* Religion together; and shews, that those things, in which the *Jews* boasted so much, were either only Types and Shadows, of what *Christianity* is in Truth and Reality; or vain and insignificant, in comparison of the Privileges of the Gospel. He says, that *Christians* are the true Circumcision, as they worship God in the Spirit. The cutting of the Flesh is not esteemed as true Circumcision, being only a Type and Shadow of that which is true and saving. *He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; And Circumcision is that of the Heart in the Spirit,* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

That he might recommend *Christianity* the better, he takes notice, that he did not become a *Christian*, because he had fewer, or less Privileges in the *Jewish* Religion, than some of his Brethren. He had as many Privileges to boast of whilst a *Jew*, as any of them all. *Circumcised the eight Day, of the stock of Israel, of the Tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Pharisee; concerning Zeal persecuting the Church: Touching the Righteousness which is in the Law blameless,* v. 4, 5, 6. But for all this, he could not but prefer the *Christian*, to the *Jewish* Religion.

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He willingly renounced all his Privileges as a *Jew*, for the sake of the Advantages of being a *Christian*. He thought there was no Comparison between the one and the other. The Knowledge of Christ, and of the *Christian* Religion, made those things, which before were of great value in his Opinion, appear contemptible. *What things were Gain to him, those he counted Loss for Christ*, v. 7. He cou'd no longer have any Dependance on his external Privileges; cou'd have no Confidence in the Flesh. The *Christian* Religion discovered to him the weakness of the Foundation; and, at the same time, represented Christ to him as the true and solid Foundation of Hope and Joy; and therefore he rejoiced, or according to the *Original*, glory'd or triumph'd in Christ: Whilst the *Jews* gloried in *Moses*, and in the Covenant of Peculiarity, whereof he was the Mediator: The *Apostle*, once a renowned *Jew*, and the *Philippians*, to whom he writes, gloried in *Christ Jesus*; as being the Mediator of a *better Covenant*, which is *established upon better Promises*, Heb. viii. 6.

As the *Apostle* renounceth his Confidence in the Flesh; not only in Circumcision, but in all other External Privileges belonging to the *Jewish* Religion, and glories in *Christ Jesus*, and the Privileges of the Gospel; I think it will not be improper to consider,

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I. The several Grounds of our glorying in Christ.

II. I shall consider our Obligations to Glory in Christ. I am,

I. To consider the several Grounds of our glorying in Christ. I have here a large Field; but shall only consider some of the most distinguishing Privileges.

1. 'Tis matter of glorying in Christ, that he has brought the joyful Tidings of Salvation to the *Gentile World*. *Salvation is come unto the Gentiles*, Rom. ii. 11. *The Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles*, Acts xxviii. 28. The *Gentiles* liv'd in Darkness, *were Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World*; whilst the *Jews* were a Nation known of God above all the Families of the Earth, Amos iii. 2. But all this while God had kind, tho' secret, Intentions concerning the *Gentiles*. And *when the Fulness of Time was come*, he sent his Son with the glorious Message of Peace to the *Gentile World*. *He set him to be a Light of the Gentiles, that he might be for Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*. This was Tidings of great Joy to them; *for when they heard this, they were glad and glorified the Word of the Lord*, Acts xiii. 47, 48. When this Mystery of calling the *Gentiles* was made manifest,

manifest, Riches of Grace were discovered, and the *Gentiles* triumph'd in *Christ*, as the *Hope of Glory*.

Let it not be objected, that the Apostle *Paul* cou'd have no share in this Joy because a *Jew*; for he greatly rejoiced in the Salvation of the *Gentiles*. He was in an eminent manner the *Apostle* of the Uncircumcision; and tho' he says, *he could wish, that he was accursed from Christ for his Brethren, his Kinsmen according to the Flesh*, Rom. ix. 3. He thought it his peculiar Happiness, that he was commissioned to preach Salvation to the *Gentiles*. *Unto me*, says he, *who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ; and to make all Men see, what is the Fellowship of the Mystery, which from the Beginning of the World, hath been hid in God*, Eph. iii. 8, 9.

2. 'Tis matter of glorying in Christ, that he has injoin'd us a much more reasonable Service, than that which *Moses* injoin'd the *Jews*. The Religion of the *Jews* was clogg'd with burthensome and costly Rites and Ceremonies. Their Sacrifices, and their frequent Washings and Abstinences, were a great and painful Slavery. They were kept in Bondage to weak and beggarly Elements, and had a great many carnal Ordinances imposed on them, which
were

were a Yoke they were not able to bear; and which, nevertheless, *did not profit them that were occupied therein: did not make them that did the Service perfect as pertaining to the Conscience*, Heb. ix. 9. and xiii. 9.

But the *Christian Religion* imposes no such Service upon us. 'Tis now a *time of Reformation*. We have no concern with the Blood of Bulls, or of Goats, or the Ashes of an Heifer: *Christ is come an High-Priest of good things to come*, and we are sure that the *Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without Spot to God, is of sufficient Virtue and Efficacy to purge our Consciences from dead Works*, Heb. ix. 14. *He hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering, and a Sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling Savour*, Eph. v. 2. Christians themselves can offer up a reasonable and acceptable Sacrifice unto God: He who desired not Sacrifice, nor delighted in Burnt-offerings, is delighted with the Service of his Saints: 'Tis an Odour of a sweet smell, well pleasing to God. *I beseech you, Brethren, says the Apostle, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable Service*, Rom. xii. 1. *The Kingdom of God, or Christianity, consisteth not in Meat and Drink, but in Righteousness and Peace*, Rom. xiv. 17. The Laws
of

of Christianity, tend either to the Perfection of human Nature, or the Peace and Happiness of human Society. We are thereby obliged to the diligent Study and Practice, *of whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, and whatever else that deserves the Name of Virtue, and has any just pretense to Praise, Philip. iv. 8.*

3. 'Tis Matter of glorying in Christ, that he has made a clear and full Report of all that Duty, that God requires of us, and of all that Grace and Favour, which he designs us. *The People, that walked in Darkeness, saith the Prophet, have such a great Light; they that dwell in the Land of the shadow of Death, upon them hath the Light shined, Isa. ix. 2.* Many of the Laws which God gave by *Moses* were intricate, and their Meaning dark and doubtful; and therefore, they were often obliged to have recourse to *Moses*, to enquire of God, and *he made them know the Statutes of God, and his Laws, Exod. xviii. 15, 16.* Their Religion was full of Types and dark Resemblances; and they were very few that were able to spell out their meaning; they had only *the shadow of good things to come*, which very much confined their Views and Expectations.

But, whereas *Moses* gave an obscure Law, that offer'd but little Encouragement to those whom it obliged; *our Lord Jesus* came into the World, furnished both with Light and Grace. *He dwelt among us*, saith *John*, full of Grace and Truth, Joh. i. 14. The great *Christian Prophet*, who came from the Bosom of the *Father*, hath declared him unto us. He has fully and clearly acquainted us with the Counsel of God. His Laws are delivered in plain and expresse Terms; and the necessary Doctrines of the *Christian Faith* are obvious to the meanest Capacity. *He that runs may read. An high way*, saith the *Prophet*, shall be there; *the Way-faring Men, tho' Fools, shall not err therein*, Isa. xxxv. 8.

'Tis true, our Lord, when upon Earth, spoke many things in Parables to the People; but their Obstinacy, and wilful Blindness was the Cause of it. *St. Matthew* expressly tells us from the Mouth of Christ, that he therefore spake to them in Parables, because they seeing would not, or did not see; and hearing did not understand; and that they did not see, hear, and understand, because their Heart was waxed gross, and their Ears heavy, and they had closed their Eyes, lest they should see, and hear, and be converted, Mat. xiii.

To the Teachable, *our Lord* spake in a manner that was much more intelligible;

and whenever he spake in Parables in the hearing of his *Disciples*, he afterwards, at their Request, explain'd them to them: And 'tis observable, that after he had explained the Meaning of the Parables to them, he let them understand, that they ought not to conceal the Knowledge that he had imparted to them; but should be careful to instruct others in the Mysteries of the Kingdom. Tho' he said to his *Disciples*, unto you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God; after he had explained some of those Mysteries to them, he added, *No Man, when he hath lighted a Candle, covereth it with a Vessel, or putteth it under a Bed, but setteth it on a Candlestick, that they which enter in may see the Light*: As much as to say, I have given you this Light, not for your own private Advantage only, but to be communicated by you to others, that they also may reap Advantage from it. Our Saviour further adds in the next verse, *For nothing is secret, i. e. nothing that I now teach you secretly, that shall not be made manifest; neither is any thing hid, i. e. in Parables, that shall not be known, and come abroad*, Luke viii.

Indeed, our Lord spake some things to the *Disciples* themselves, in a manner that was not very distinct and particular, which he promised to explain more fully, after his Ascension, and the Mission of the
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Holy Ghost, Joh. xvi. 15. These things have I spoken to you in Proverbs, the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in Proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

There were also several things which he entirely concealed from them, during his Ministration upon Earth, because they were not disposed to receive them: But he assured them, that they should be fully made known to them, under the *Ministration* of the Spirit, Joh. xvi. 12, 13. *I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all Truth.*

Whatever was necessary for them to know, during his abode upon Earth, he fully revealed to them, Joh. xv. 15. — *All things which I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.*

After his Resurrection, and before his Ascension, he imparted more Light and Knowledge to them than they had before. *He convers'd with them forty Days, speaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, Acts i. 3. Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded [unto the two Persons going to Emmaus] in all the Scriptures concerning himself, Luke xxiv. 27. Afterwards, appearing to the Apostles, 'tis said, he opened their Understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And said*

said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the Dead the third Day: And that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name, among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem. v. 45, 46, 47.

But the greatest Communication of Light was after his *Ascension*, when the *Holy Ghost* fell upon the *Disciples*, on the Day of *Pentecost*.

Tho', even then, all things were not fully made known to them. The *calling* of the *Gentiles*, and admitting them to equal Privileges with the *Jews*, without obliging them to be circumcised, was still unknown to them. About eight Years after this, *Peter* had the Vision of the Sheet, to teach him not to despise the *Gentiles*, and that Christ was to be preached to them, as well as to the *Jews*.

The Freedom of the *Jews* from the *Mosaick* Ceremonies, was unknown to them several Years after this. We find in the 21 of *Acts*, 20, 21, &c. that the Multitudes amongst the *Jews*, that were converted to *Christianity*, were scandalized at the Report that *Paul* taught the *Jewish* Converts, that they were no longer obliged by the Ceremonial Laws of *Moses*. No Doubt, the *Holy Ghost* had been imparted to many of them: And yet they still thought they were under an Obligation to them.

The Advice which *James*, and the *Elders* that were with him, gave to the Apostle *Paul*, to remove the Scandal by submitting to a Ceremonial Rite; and the *Apostle's* complying with their Advice, is no Proof that the Law was still binding to the *Jewish* Converts: for 'tis plain, that the Apostle *Paul* knew the contrary by Revelation, and had declared an Exemption from it, before his going up to *Jerusalem*, in his *Epistle* to the *Romans*, Chap. vii. where he addresseth himself to the *Jewish* Converts, and endeavours to convince them, in the most obliging and inoffensive Manner, that they were no longer under Obligation to the Law of *Moses*. He tells them in particular, v. 4. *That they are become dead to the Law, by the Body of Christ*. And v. 6. *That they are delivered from the Law, that [i. e. the Law] being dead, in which they were held*.

As our Lord is clear, and exprefs in his Instructions relating to our Duty; so he plainly, and fully acquainted us with the many Advantages that the sincere Discharge of our Duty will entitle us to. He came into the World to testify God's good Will towards us; and he has fully executed this Commission. He has discovered to us Treasures of Grace, unknown under former Dispensations. He has published a new Covenant, much more gracious and bene-

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beneficial than the former: A Covenant established upon better Promises. By the Gospel, God has given to us exceeding great and precious Promises, 2 Pet. i. 4.

We have that Promise of having our Hearts and Consciences cleansed, and all our Guilt removed, which it was not in the Power of the Law of Moses to do. By Christ, saith the Apostle, *All that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, Acts xiii. 39. The Promise of everlasting Happiness is more clearly and fully express'd, than under the Old Testament: Christ being said to have brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10.

Nothing is more manifest, than that our Lord has blessed the World both with Light and Grace. *John the Baptist was a burning and a shining Light, and the Jews, for a Season, rejoiced in his Light.* Our Lord Jesus is eminently the Light of the World; and therefore we have more abundant Reason to triumph in so glorious a Light.

4. 'Tis Matter of glorying in Christ, that the new Covenant, which is so full of Grace and Love, is established and confirmed in his Blood. All the Promises of the Gospel are God's New Testament, or Covenant in Christ's Blood, *Luke xxii. 20.*

I do not know, but the *Apostle* might have a particular View to this Advantage which we have by Christ, as a peculiar Ground of glorying in him. He is warning the *Philippians* against the Designs of the *Judaizing Christians*, who were for obliging them to be circumcis'd. They laid a very great Stress upon Circumcision, looking upon it as the Token, or Seal of God's Covenant with them. 'Tis expressly so called, *Gen. xvii. 11.* and *v. 13.* 'tis called *God's Covenant*. Now, that this Argument might not prevail with the *Philippians* to submit to be circumcis'd, 'tis not unlikely that the *Apostle*, when he says, *We rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh*, intimates particularly, that the Gospel Covenant is confirmed by the Death of Christ; and that therefore the Necessity of Circumcision is superseded: There is no Occasion to look for any other Seal; this is a sufficient Foundation for Trust and Confidence.

Covenants under the Law, were wont to be confirmed with Blood. *The first Covenant was not dedicated without it; for when Moses had spoken every Precept to all the People, according to the Law, he took the Blood of Calves, and of Goats, and sprinkled both the Book, and all the People, saying, this is the Blood of the Testament which God hath enjoyned unto you.*

you, Heb. ix. 18, 19, 20. In like Manner, the *New Covenant* is confirmed with Blood. *Not with the Blood of Calves and of Goats, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot,* 1 Pet. i. 19. *So that all the Promises of God are Yea, and Amen, in Christ Jesus,* 2 Cor. i. 20. On this Account, we have strong Consolation, and rejoyce in *Christ Jesus*, who has so firmly established the *Gospel Covenant*.

5. 'Tis matter of glorying in Christ, that he is our Advocate and Intercessor: *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the Propitiation for our Sins,* 1 John ii. 12.

Under the *Old Testament*, *Moses*, and the *Prophets* often interceded with God for the People. *Moses* was an importunate Intercessor, and had great Power with God. He was admitted into the Sanctuary whenever he pleased. See particularly *Num. xvii. 8.* and *xxvii. 5.* This was a greater Privilege than was allowed to *Aaron*, or any of the succeeding *High-Priests*.

When the Children of *Israel* had sinned against God, in making a Calf, and worshipping it; God speaks as one that was apprehensive, that *Moses's* Applications on

the Behalf of the People, wou'd divert him from executing his Design of punishing them. *Let me alone*, saith he, *that my Wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them*, Exod. xxxii. 10. This did not hinder Moses from interposing: And God heard him, and repented of the Evil which he thought to do unto his People, v. 14. *He did not utterly consume them*. Yet Moses with all his Influence and Importunity cou'd not wholly divert the Storm. *The Lord plagued the People, because they made the Calf which Aaron made*, ver. 35.

When the People murmured, because of the evil Report which the Spies brought of the Land of Canaan, God was exceedingly provoked, and threatned *to smite them with the Pestilence, and to disinherit them: and promised Moses, that he would make of him a greater Nation, and mightier than they*, Num. xiv. 12. But, notwithstanding the Honour God was willing to confer upon him, in case he executed the Threatning, Moses strongly solicited God to pardon the Iniquity of the People; and God said unto him, *I have pardoned according to thy Word*, ver. 20. He did not *kill them as one Man*. Nevertheless, he wou'd not suffer them to enter into the promised Rest, but caused them to wander in the Wilderness forty Years, till they were

were all, excepting *Caleb* and *Joshua*, utterly consumed, ver. 33, 35.

There were Cases, in which, tho' both *Moses* and *Samuel*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, had stood before the Lord, and interceded for the People, they could not have prevailed.

The Prophet *Jeremiah*, was a zealous Advocate for them; but God often forbid him to make Intercession for them, *Jerem.* vii. 16. and xi. 14. and xiv. 11.

The *Lord Jesus Christ* is a much more prevailing Intercessor, than either *Moses* or the *Prophets*. He never fails of Success, in any of his Addresses to the *Father*, *Joh.* xi. 42. *I know*, says he, *that thou hearest me always*.

The *High-Priest* among the *Jews* was the Person, whose Office it was in particular to intercede for the People, by making an Atonement for them; but he was infinitely inferior to the *Christian High-Priest* and *Advocate*, particularly on the following Accounts.

1. Because he was admitted into the *Holy of Holies*, to intercede for the People, only on one Day in the Year. *Into the second Tabernacle went the High-Priest alone once every Year*, *Heb.* ix. 7. 'Twas an humbling Consideration to the *Jews*, that they had but one great Day of Atonement in the whole Year.

Our *High-Priest* and *Advocate* lies under no such Restraints: *He is entred in once into the Holy Place, into Heaven itself, the true Holy of Holies, to appear in the Presence of God for us.* He is exalted at God's Right Hand, and is ever in his Presence.

2. Another Imperfection, that attended the *Jewish High-Priest*, was the Necessity he lay under of offering for his own Sins, before he cou'd be admitted to offer for the Sins of the People. Heb. ix. 7. *Into the second Tabernacle went the High Priest alone once every year, not without Blood, which he offered for himself, and for the Errors of the People.*

The *Christian High-Priest* and *Advocate* has no Sins of his own, to make Atonement for, which eminently qualifies him for his Office. *For such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, who needeth not daily, as the Jewish High-Priests, to offer up Sacrifice, first for his own Sins, and then for the Peoples.*

3. Under the Law, there was a frequent Succession of *High-Priests*; which was another Imperfection attending their Office. *They, truly, were many Priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of Death,* Heb. vii. 23.

The *Christian High-Priest* continueth for ever, and hath an unchangeable *Priesthood*. This is a Circumstance which gives him the Preference to all the *High-Priests* that have been before him: *For he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25.

I may add,

4. That the *Christian High-Priest* and *Advocate* is abundantly more compassionate, than any of the *High-Priests* of old. He sympathizes with us in our Temptations and Afflictions. Having had Experience himself of the Power of Satan's Temptations, and of the Weight and Influence of great and heavy Afflictions, he is thereby disposed to pity us, whenever we fall into Temptation, or lie under the Pressure of any Affliction, and to send us Help from the *Mercy-Seat*. This is a great Encouragement to Stedfastness and Resolution in our Christian Course. *Seeing*, says the Apostle to the Hebrews, *We have a great High-Priest that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our Profession. For we have not an High-Priest that cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities: but was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin*. And Chap. ii. 18. *In that he himself*

self hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

6. 'Tis Matter of glorying in Christ, that we may worship God in any convenient Place; *every where*. A great Part of the *Jewish* Worship consisted in offering up Sacrifices to God, and these were confined to one Place. The *Jews* were not at Liberty to erect an Altar wherever they pleased, and offer Sacrifices upon it: they were confined to the Place of God's peculiar Residence among them. In the Wilderness they were obliged to bring their Sacrifices to the Door of the Tabernacle; *Lev. xvii. 8*. This, perhaps, will be thought to have been no great Hardship upon them, in regard the Tabernacle was in the Midst of their Camp: But when they came to the Land of *Canaan*, it was no easy Matter for them to observe the Charge that was given them, with Respect to the Place of Worship, and their Attendance there. The Charge is as follows; *Deut. xii. 5, 6. Unto the Place which the Lord your God shall chuse out of all your Tribes to put his Name there, even unto his Habitation shall ye seek; and thither thou shalt come, and thither ye shall bring your Burnt-Offerings, and your Tithes, and Heave-Offerings of your Hand, and your Vows, and your Free-will-Offerings, and the Firstlings of your Herds, and of your Flocks;*
and

and v. 13, 14. *Take heed to thy self, that thou offer not thy Burnt-Offerings in every Place that thou seest: But in the Place which the Lord shall chuse in one of thy Tribes, there thou shalt offer thy Burnt-Offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.*

When the Children of *Israel* came to the Promised Land, God made choice of *Shiloh* for the Place of Worship; *there he set his Name at the first*, Jerem. vii. 12. *and the whole Congregation of the Children of Israel assembled together, and set up the Tabernacle of the Congregation there*, Jos. xviii. 1. And thither the People went, and worshiped God. 'Tis said, in particular, of *Elkanah the Father of Samuel*, *that he went up out of his City yearly to worship, and to sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh*, 1 Sam. i. 3.

The Ark remained a long Time in *Shiloh*; but after, for the Wickedness of the People, it fell into the Hands of the *Philistines*, it was in an unsettled Condition for some Time; being sometimes in *Mispeh*, sometimes at *Gilgal*, and at *Nob*, and *Gibeon*, and the *House of Obed-Edom*. Whilst it was in this wandering State, 'tis probable the People were not obliged to offer their Sacrifices before it. Whilst it remained in *Kirjath-jearim*, *Samuel* erected an Altar at *Mispeh*, and offered Sacrifice upon it.

it, 1 *Sam.* ix. He also built an Altar at *Ramah*, the Place of his Residence, 1 *Sam.* vii. 17. and we find all the People offering Sacrifices before the Lord at *Gilgal*, 1 *Sam.* xi. 15. nay *Samuel*, at this Time, offered Sacrifices in *High Places*, 1 *Sam.* ix. 13. It may be, indeed, that *Samuel* being a *Prophet* had an immediate Warrant from God for what he did.

After the Ark had been for some Time in this wandering State, *David* prepared a Place for it in his own City of *Sion*, and pitched for it a Tent, and brought it up thither, from the *House of Obed-Edom*, where it had remained for the Space of three Months. After this, *God* had his *Tabernacle in Salem*, and his *Dwelling-Place in Sion*, *Psal.* lxxvi. 2. and thither the People were obliged to bring their Sacrifices, and worship at his Altar.

All this while, the Ark of God dwelt in a Tent, or Tabernacle: But *Solomon* built an *House* for the Lord, and prepared an *Oracle* for the *Ark of the Covenant*: And then the Ark had Rest, a settled Place to abide in: *And God hallowed the House, and put his Name there; and chose it to himself for an House of Sacrifice; and promised that his Eyes should be open, and his Ears attentive to the Prayers that should be offered to him there.* 2 *Chron.* vii. 15.

After

After this, the People were obliged to bring all their Sacrifices to the Temple at *Jerusalem*; thither all the Tribes were bound to come up three Times a Year. *Deut. xvi. 16. Three Times a Year shall all thy Males appear before the Lord thy God, in the Place which he shall chuse, in the Feast of unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles: And they shall not appear before the Lord empty.*

Many, who lived without the Bounds of *Palestine*, took long and tedious Journeys to *Jerusalem*. We read of an *Eunuch*, a *Profelyted Jew*, and a man of great Authority under *Candace*, Queen of *Ethiopia*, who came to *Jerusalem*, at the Feast of *Pentecost*, to worship, *Acts viii. 27.* And at the Time of *Pentecost*, when the *Holy Ghost* fell upon the hundred and twenty, there were *Jews* come up to *Jerusalem* to worship, out of every Nation under Heaven, *Acts ii. 5.* The Temple at *Jerusalem* was the House of Prayer to all People. Not only *Jews* by Nation, or Religion, came to worship there; but *Proselytes of the Gate*, who worshiped the true God, without going over to the *Jewish* Religion. When our Lord rode in Triumph to *Jerusalem*, there were certain devout *Greeks* that attended his Train, who were come up thither to worship at the

the Feast, John xii. 20. This was agreeable to King Solomon's Prayer, at the Dedication of the Temple. Concerning a Stranger, says he, that is not of thy People Israel, but cometh out of a far Country for thy Name's sake: When he shall come and pray towards this House: hear thou in Heaven thy dwelling Place, and do according to all that the Stranger calleth to thee for, 1 Kings viii. 41, 42, 43.

'Tis true, the *Jews* had their *Synagogues* in several Parts of the Land; at least after their return from the *Babylonish* Captivity: But the Service that was perform'd in them, was chiefly, if not wholly, the Reading of the Law and the Prophets; expounding them, and Preaching to the People from them. Thus *our Lord* taught the *Jews* in their *Synagogues*. In his own City *Nazareth*, where was a *Synagogue*, he read and expounded the *Scriptures*, Luke iv. 16. 17, &c. And in other *Synagogues*, he preached to the People, after the Reading of the Law and the Prophets was over.

The *Jews* had their *Synagogues* also in several Parts of the World, where they were dispersed: As in *Antioch in Pisidia*, where *St. Paul* preached to the People, *Acts* xiii. 14, 15. At *Corinth*, *Acts* xviii. 4. At *Ephesus*, *Acts* xviii. 19. At *Athens*, a renowned City in *Greece*, *Acts* xvii. 17. At *Damascus*, the Metropolis of *Syria*,
Acts

Acts ix. besides several other Places too tedious to mention.

They had also *Oratories*, or Places for Prayer; which, I am apt to think, were as early as the Days of *Joshua* *. Before his Time, they might conveniently offer up their publick Devotions at the Tabernacle, in Regard it was situated in the midst of their Camps: But after the Ark was settled in *Shiloh*, and the People were dispersed to the several Parts of their Conquests, they could not so conveniently resort thither upon all Occasions; and therefore, it should seem, that they were at liberty to erect convenient Places, wherein to offer up their Prayers unto God.

But, notwithstanding the *Jews* might be allowed other Places for Prayer, besides the Tabernacle and Temple; I would observe, that these were not only the principal Places, where the People assembled to offer up their Prayers unto God; but that it should seem to have been the Opinion of holy Men amongst them, that their Prayers were more effectual at these Places, then any where else. This appears probable at least,

1. From the following Words of the *Psalmist*, *My Soul thirsteth for thee; my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and*

* See *Mede*. Discourse 18.

thirsty

thirsty Land, where no Water is: To see thy Power and thy Glory, as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary, Ps. lxxiii. 1, 2. David was at this Time, in the Wilderness of Judah, whither he was fled for his own Security: And 'tis plain, that he did not meet with those special Tokens of God's Presence there, in Answer to his Prayers, that he had been often bless'd with, when he had the Liberty of worshipping him in his Sanctuary.

2. There is a Passage in the 141 Psalm, which, I think, will help to confirm the Truth of the Point under Consideration. *Let my Prayer, saith the Psalmist, be set before thee as Incense, and the lifting up of my Hands as the Evening Sacrifice, v. 2.* The Psalmist was, at this Time, banished from the Tabernacle of God's Presence: And tho' he was not without Hope, considering the Restraints he was under, that God wou'd accept his Prayers with as much readiness, as if they were offered up at the Tabernacle in conjunction with the daily Sacrifices; yet the Words seem to carry in them an Intimation, that Devotions offered up to God before the Ark of his Presence, were thought to be most prevailing.

If this should not be thought to be the Meaning, but rather, that the Offering up of Sacrifices to God, was, in those
Days

Days, esteemed the most successful Means of procuring his Favour, this will be a full Proof, that the most beneficial Parts of their Worship were confined to one Place, as all their Sacrifices were.

And indeed, their Sacrifices were of the Nature of Prayer.

When the Children of *Israel* were greatly distressed by their Brethren, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, they went unto the House of God, and fasted that Day before the Lord until Even, and offered Burnt-Offerings, and Peace-Offerings before the Lord, Judges xx. 26. This was, doubtless, by way of solemn Supplication.

Saul, in his Apology for a rash Act he had been guilty of, in offering Sacrifice, has the following words. *I said the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made Supplication to the Lord; I forced my self therefore, and offered a Burnt-Offering*, 1 Sam. xiii. 12.

Peace-Offerings were frequently offered by Way of Thanksgiving for Mercies received, and are therefore called *Sacrifices of Thanksgiving*, Lev. vii. 12, 13, 15.

When God had brought a severe Plague upon the People, in the Reign of *David*, he built an Altar unto the Lord, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings; so the Lord was intreated for the Land, and the Plague was stayed from *Israel*, 2 Sam.

xxiv. 25. *The Burnt-Offerings, says a learned Commentator upon the Place, were Prayers to God that he would remove this Plague: and Peace-Offerings were Acknowledgments of God's Goodness, who had already given David Hopes of his Mercy.*

I would observe farther, that the most solemn Way of Praying among the *Jews*, was by laying their Hands upon the Head of the Sacrifice, and confessing their Sins over it, and praying for Divine Mercy and Favour, with Acknowledgments of past Benefits. That they were ordered to lay their Hands, upon the Sacrifices, appears from several Texts of Scripture, particularly *Lev. i. 4. & iii. 2.* And 'tis highly probable, that this Ceremony was always accompanied with some Form of Devotion*.

Upon the whole, I think it plainly appears, that the *Jewish* Sacrifices, accompanied with the sincere and fervent Prayers of the Offerer, were look'd upon as the most important Parts of Divine Worship; as being thought more prevailing with God, and more acceptable to him than any other. And therefore, notwithstanding that the *Jews* had Courts for Prayer in several Parts of the Land, the most successful Method of Prayer was confined to

* *Vide* Outram, *Lib. I. Cap. 15.*

one Place, viz. the Sanctuâry. This put the People to a great many Inconveniencies, and caused a great Expence, both of Time and Money.

Blessed be God, as *our Lord Jesus* has introduced a more spiritual Service than that of the *Jews*, so he has left us at a much greater Liberty as to the Place of Worship than was ever allowed to them. There was a *Samaritan* Woman, in the Days of *our Saviour*, who was desirous to know his Opinion, whether the Temple at *Jerusalem*, or that on Mount *Gerizim* was the Place of Worship: *and she asked him, saying, our Fathers worshipped in this Mountain, and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the Place where Men ought to worship.* Our *Saviour*, in Reply, saith to her, *Woman, believe the Hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father,* John iv. 20, 21, i. e. in a little Time, the Worship of God shall be confined to neither of these Places; there shall be a full Liberty to worship him in every Place*. This is agreeable to what we find Prophesied concerning this Matter in *Malach. i. 11.* In

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* The Paraphrase that I have given of the Words, is, I think, that which has been generally received: But I must own, Mr. Mede's Sense of them has a great deal of Probability at least. *The Question*, says he, *was not about Worship in general, (for who knows not that both Jews and Samaritans*
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every Place Incense shall be offered up to my Name, and a Peace-Offering, saith the Lord of Hosts. The Prayers of the Saints are the Christian Incense; which, when offered up in the Name of the *Lord Jesus*, and by him presented upon the golden Altar, which is before the Throne of God, are an Odour of a sweet Smell, and much more acceptable than the *Jewish* Incense, which was offered up in the Holy Place. We are all of us Priests, to offer up spiritual Sacrifice unto God; and are obliged to *pray every where, without Wrath, and Doubting*, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

7. 'Tis Matter of Glorifying in Christ, that we have Access to God through him. The *Jews* were God's peculiar People, among whom he dwelt: and yet they were kept at an awful Distance from the *Royal Presence*; and were laid under a great many Restraints on the Account of external Pollutions, which were frequent amongst them. A Leper was not suffered to dwell in the Camp of *Israel*, where God had his Habi-

had other Places of Worship besides either of these) but about that Kind of Worship in special, i. e. of Worship by Sacrifice, which was confessed by both Sides to be tied to one certain Place only. According to this Sense, the meaning of our Saviour's Words must be, that in a little Time, an End will be put to the Way of worshipping God by Sacrifices. See *Mede's Discours.* 12. *Whitby* on the Place. Hence it plainly follows, that Christians are under no Obligation to those Laws, which restrained the principal Parts of Worship to one Place.

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tation, *Lev. xiii. 46.* And every one that had an Issue, or was defiled by the Dead, was put out of the Camp. The Reason of this Prohibition is given by God himself, in the following Words. *That they defile not their Camps, in the midst whereof I dwell, Numb. v. 1, 2, 3.* They who were under no legal Uncleanneſs, were kept at a Distance from God. When he appeared on the Top of Mount *Sinai*, none were permitted to go up unto him, but his Servant *Moses*. Bounds were set about the Mount, that the People might not so much as touch it, *Exod. xix. 12. Thou shalt set Bounds unto the People round about, saying, take heed unto your selves, that ye go not up into the Mount, or touch the Border of it: whosoever toucheth the Mount, shall surely be put to Death.* God called up some of the Children of *Israel* to worship him; but even then, they were obliged to worship at a great Distance from him, *Exod. xxiv. 1, 2. And the Lord said unto Moses, come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the Elders of Israel, and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near unto the Lord: But they shall not come nigh, neither shall the People go up with him.*

God had his peculiar Residence, a great many Years, on the *Mercy-Seat*, which was upon the Ark in the Tabernacle. The

Place where the Ark was situated, called the *Holy of Holies*, or *The Most Holy*, was separated from the other Part of the Tabernacle, called the *Holy-Place*, by a Veil; and the whole Tabernacle was encompassed by a Court. When the People came to appear before God, they were only admitted to worship in the Court, and to offer their Sacrifices at the Door of the Tabernacle. Here they left their Offerings, which were all of them insufficient to bring them nearer unto God.

When the Temple was built, God had his peculiar Place of Residence in it, as formerly he had in the Tabernacle. He dwelt upon the *Mercy-Seat*, between the *Cherubims*, in an *Oracle* separated from all the other Parts of the Temple: This was called *The Most Holy Place*. Adjoyning to this, was another Apartment, called the *Holy-Place*, or *Sanctuary*, where was the Golden Altar of Incense: These were the principal Parts of the House; which, in our Saviour's Days, was surrounded with three Courts. The first Court, was that which belonged to the Priests; wherein stood the Altar of Burnt-Offering. None were admitted to come within this Court, excepting the Priests and Levites: (unless it were when particular Persons came to offer their own Sacrifices; for in this Case, the Offerer was obliged to lay his Hand

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upon the Head of his Offering, and kill it at the Altar.) The next Court, was called the Court of the People; where all that were *Jews*, either by Nation, or Profession, were allowed to Worship. The third, or outmost Court, was called the Court of the *Gentiles*; and was accounted prophane and common.

Into the *Holy of Holies*, none were admitted to enter, excepting the *High-Priest*: None were suffered to approach the *Propitiation*, or *Mercy-Seat*, either whilst the Tabernacle, or Temple were standing, but He. And this Liberty, granted the *High-Priest*, was only on one Day in the Year; viz. on the great Day of Atonement. And there are two things very remarkable on this Occasion, which shew at what a Distance the Priests, and much more the People, were kept from the *Divine Presence*.

1. The *High-Priest*, when he entered within the Veil, was to sprinkle Incense upon a Censer full of Burning-Coals, that the Smoak of it might cover the *Mercy-Seat*, and be as it were a Veil between the *Divine Glory*, and the *High-Priest*, Lev. xvi. 12, 13. *He shall take a Censer full of Burning-Coals of Fire from off the Altar before the Lord, and his Hands full of sweet Incense beaten small, and bring it within the Veil, and he shall put the Incense upon the Fire before the Lord, that the*

Cloud of the Incense may cover the Mercy-Seat that is upon the Testimony, that he die not.

2. Whilst the *High-Priest* was engaged in making Atonement in the *Most Holy Place*, within the Veil, the *Priests* and *Levites* were not suffered to be in the Tabernacle, on the Account of the *Divine Majesty* manifested, at that Time, in an extraordinary Manner. This is evident from *Levit. xvi. 17. And there shall be no Man, i. e. no Priest, or Levite, in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, when he goeth in to make Atonement in the Holy-Place, until he come out, and have made an Atonement for himself, and for his Household, and for all the Congregation of Israel.*

It plainly appears from what has been said, that the People of *Israel* were kept at a great Distance from the *Divine Presence* and *Mercy-Seat*; and were never suffered to approach unto it. That all the *Priests*, excepting the *High-Priest*, tho' they had a Station assigned them nearer the *Divine Presence*, and are said to come nigh unto him, *Lev. x. 3.* were denied Admittance into the *Oracle*, or *Most Holy Place*, and were removed from their usual Station, on the great Day of Atonement, when God manifested himself in the *Most Holy Place*, in an extraordinary manner. And lastly, that the *High-Priest* himself did

did not approach the immediate Presence of God; a Cloud interposing between him and the *Mercy-Seat*.

Blessed be God, *Christians* are under no such Restraints: and we cannot but glory in Christ Jesus, by whom we have Access unto the *Father*. The *Apostle* to the *Ephesians* says, *we have Boldness and Access, with Confidence, by the Faith of him*, Eph. iii. 12. No other Pollution than that of Sin, can exclude us from the Divine Presence. The *Gentiles* were kept at the greatest Distance from God, being counted unclean: But *Christ has broke down the middle Wall of Partition that was between us and the Jews, and has brought us near to God*.

Christ Jesus is the *Christian Mercy-Seat*, from whence God liberally dispenseth his Favours. 'Tis said, *Rom. iii. 25. that God hath set forth Christ to be a Propitiation*: The true Reading is, *he hath set him forth to be a Propitiatory, or Mercy-Seat*; whose Presence is not attended with that Terror and Majesty, that attended the Presence of God under the *Old-Testament*. *We are not come unto the Mount that might be touched, and that burned with Fire, nor unto Blackness, and Darkeness, and Tempest. But we are come unto Mount Sion, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New-Covenant, and to the Blood of Sprinkling that speaketh better things than the Blood of Abel*,
 Heb.

Heb. xii. *Christ Jesus is the Mercy-Seat, and his Blood is the Blood of Sprinkling, which is of much greater Efficacy to recommend us to the Divine Favour, and to procure us Admittance into his Presence, than the Blood of the Goat, wherewith the High-Priest, under the Law, sprinkled the Mercy-Seat.*

Having *Christ Jesus* for our *Propitiatory*, or *Mercy Seat*, we may approach the *Divine Presence* with holy Boldness, and Confidence of Acceptance. *We have not*, saith the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, *an High-Priest that cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities; let us therefore, depending on his Intercession for, and Sympathy with us, come boldly to the Throne of Grace*, i. e. to *Christ Jesus* who is set forth to be the *Propitiatory*, or *Mercy-Seat*, *that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 15, 16. By Virtue of the Blood of *Jesus*, we may all of us draw near unto God, and present our selves before the *Mercy-Seat*. *The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God*, Heb. vii. 19.

8. 'Tis matter of Glorifying in *Christ*, that we may present our Supplications to God in his Name, and pray for his Sake. This is a prevailing Argument in Prayer, which the *Jews* of old were ignorant of.

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They were wont to pray before the Ark. When the Children of *Israel* fled before the Men of *Ai*, *Joshua*, and the Elders of *Israel*, fell upon their Faces, before the Ark of the Lord, *Josh. vii. 6. We will go*, saith the Psalmist, *into his Tabernacle: we will worship at his Footstool*, Ps. cxxxii. 7. They also prayed towards God's Temple, and Oracle, and were careful never to omit this Ceremony, laying great stress upon it. *Solomon*, in his Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, has the following Petitions. *Have respect unto the Prayer of thy Servant, that thine Eyes may be open towards this House, Night and Day, even toward the Place of which thou hast said, my Name shall be there. That thou mayest hearken unto the Prayer which thy Servant shall make towards this Place. And hearken thou to the Supplication of thy Servant, and of thy People Israel, when they shall pray towards this Place*, 1 Kings viii. 28, 29, 30. *Daniel*, when he was at a great Distance from the Temple, even at *Babylon*, prayed towards *Jerusalem*, Dan. vi. 10. This was only looking towards God, and of no greater Efficacy than our looking towards Heaven when we pray. We may all of us pray with the Psalmist, *hear the Voice of my Supplication, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my Hands towards thy holy Oracle*, Ps. xxviii. 2.

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In order to render their Prayers the more acceptable, they also prayed at the Hours of Prayer, *i. e.* when the Sacrifices were offered up in the Temple, *viz.* in the Morning, at Noon, and in the Evening. Accordingly, *Daniel* prayed three Times a Day, *Dan.* vi. 10. And *David* saith, *Pf.* lv. 17. *Evening, and Morning, and at Noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my Voice.* This was a Practice observ'd, as is probable, by the *devout Gentiles*, as well as by the *Jews*. *Cornelius* was praying at the ninth Hour (one of the Hours of Prayer) when the Angel appeared to him, *Acts* x. 13. Nay, *Peter*, after he was called to be an *Apostle*, and even after *our Lord's* Ascension, and the Descent of the *Holy Ghost*, observes the same Practice. When he had the Vision of the Sheet, he was praying, and it was at the sixth Hour, which was one of their Hours of Prayer, *Acts* x. 9.

The *Jews*, in their Prayers, sometimes prayed for *God's Names sake*, *i. e.* for the Honour of his many glorious Perfections. Thus the Psalmist *David*, under the Weight and Burthen of some very heinous Sin, *prays for thy Names sake, O Lord, pardon mine Iniquity : for it is great, Pf.* xxv. 11.

'Twas particularly customary with them to pray for *God's Mercies sake*. *Return, O Lord*, saith the Psalmist, *deliver my Soul,*

O save me for thy Mercys sake, Ps. vi. 4. and so Ps. xxxi. 16. *Make thy Face to shine upon thy Servant, save me for thy Names sake.* David, in his famous penitential Psalm, builds his Hope and Comfort particularly on the *Multitude of God's tender Mercies*, Ps. li.

Sometimes, in order to prevail with God in Prayer, they put him in mind of his *Covenant with them*. Thus, when they were in great Distress, God having resolved to reject them, and having forbid the Prophet to pray for them, they say; *Remember, break not thy Covenant with us*. They pray also, at the same Time, for the *Temple's sake*, i. e. for the Regard due to his Holy Habitation. *Do not, say they, disgrace the Throne of thy Glory*, i. e. do not suffer the *Heathen* to pollute it, and lay it waste, Jerem. xiv. 21.

Sometimes God was addressed for Mercy to them, *for the sake of their Fathers*. Thus Moses, in his Prayer on their Behalf, says, *Remember thy Servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, look not to the Stubbornness of this People, nor to their Wickedness, nor to their Sin*, Deut. ix. 27. & Isa. lxiii. 17. *Return, for thy Servant's sake, the Tribes of thine Inheritance.*

Sometimes God was addressed on their Behalf *for their own sakes*, or rather *for the special Love and Regard which he had*

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had manifested towards them in the Face of the World. Hear the People, says Solomon, when they repent in the Land of their Enemies, which led them away Captive, and forgive them all their Transgressions, for they be thy People, and thine Inheritance which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the Furnace of Iron, 1 Kings viii. 48. 50, 51. Daniel, in his Prayer for the Restauration of Jerusalem, says, O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, hearken and do, for thy City and thy People are called by thy Name, Dan. ix. 19.

These are some of the principal Arguments that have occur'd to me, which the *Jews* made use of in their Prayers to God. They prayed for *God's Names sake*; for *their Fathers sake*; for *the Regard due to the Covenant*; for *the Temple's sake*, and for *their own sake*; or rather for *the particular Love that he had for them*: And they turned their Faces when they prayed, towards the *Mercy-Seat*, both when it was in the *Tabernacle* and *Temple*. They never prayed in the Name of *the Lord Jesus*; never, I believe, in the Name of the *Messiah**; never in the Name of the *Mediator of the New-*

* There is a disputed Passage in *Daniel ix. 17. Now therefore, O our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant, and his Supplications, and cause thy Face to shine upon thy Sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. I am apt to think, for the Lord's sake, is used instead of for thine own sake. We have*

New-Covenant. This is a distinguishing Privilege reserved for the *Christian Church*: a Privilege, which, I suppose, the *Disciples* themselves were not bless'd with, till after Christ's Death and Intercession at God's Right Hand. This, I think, appears evident, from the following Words of our Saviour to his *Disciples*. *Now ye have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your Heart shall rejoice, and your Joy no Man taketh from you. And in that Day ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full,* John xvi. 22, 23, 24.

9. 'Tis Matter of Glorifying in Christ, that we can procure the greatest Blessings for his sake. God will freely give us all things for his *Son's* sake. Particularly,

1. He will freely forgive us all our Sins for his sake. *In him we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace,* Eph. i. 7. He is the great Propitiation for the Sins of the World: *by him we have received the Atonement.* He even atones and intercedes for all Sins. *Be it known*

have the like Form of Speech, 1 Sam. iii. 21. *The Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh, by the Word of the Lord,* i. e. by speaking to him himself, with an audible Voice.

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to you, saith the Apostle Paul, that thro' this Man is preached to you the Forgiveness of Sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses, Acts xiii. 38, 39.

We do not only obtain Absolution from all our Sins, which have rendered us obnoxious to the Divine Displeasure: But,

2. For *Christ's* sake, we are admitted into a State of Grace and Favour with God. *We have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have Access into this Grace wherein we stand, Rom. v. 1, 2.*

3. Through *Christ*, we have free Admittance into the *Holiest of all*, even into *Heaven*, whither the *Forerunner* is for us entered. The *Christian* Hope entereth into that within the Veil. There was, no doubt, a Passage into Heaven before *Christ's* Ascension thither, but the Way was not so easy, nor so fully known. *Elijah was taken up into Heaven, 2 Kings ii. 11. And the Beggar was carried into Abraham's Bosom, Luke xvi. 22.* The Way, and Entrance into Heaven is made easy, and fully manifested, by the Entrance of the great *High-Priest* into Heaven with his own Blood, there to make continual Intercession for us. Nay, his Death and Intercession, have opened us a new and living Way

Way into the true *Holy of Holies*, whether all that truly believe in him, may follow him, and not be thought guilty of Presumption. *Having therefore, Brethren,* says the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, *boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way which he hath consecrated for us, thro' the Veil, i. e. his Flesh, and having an High-Priest over the House of God; let us draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith,* Heb. x. 19—22. So plain is it, that we have eternal Life through our Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Lastly, 'tis Matter of Glorifying in Christ, that he is ascended up to Heaven, to prepare Mansions of Glory for his People. He is gone as our Harbinger to Heaven, to make suitable Provision for us. In this Respect, the Ark seems to have been a Type of Christ. When the *Israelites* took their Journeys in the Wilderness, the Ark went before them, to provide a safe, convenient Place for them, to pitch their Tents in, Num. x. 30. *They departed from the Mount of the Lord three Days Journey: And the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them in the three Days Journey to search out a Resting-Place for them.* But, notwithstanding this Care for their Safety, and Convenience, they had no settled Abode; removing from Place

to Place, in a barren and desolate Wilderness. At last, indeed, God conducted them to a plentiful Land, which he had provided for them. *I brought them*, says he, *forth of the Land of Egypt, into a Land, that I had espied for them, flowing with Milk and Honey, which is the Glory of all Lands*, Ezek. xx. 6.

But what was *Canaan*, tho' *the Glory of all Lands*, in Comparison of the *Canaan above*, whither our *Forerunner* is gone before us, and where he is preparing Rest for all his Followers?

Tho' the *Jews*, at their coming to the promised Land, found *Cities which they planted not*; they were frequently disturbed in the Possession of them, *having Enemies that were Thorns in their Sides, and Pricks in their Eyes*, and, at last, were wholly dispossessed; and have remained, many hundred Years, in Banishment from the Land which God gave unto their Fathers.

Our Lord *Jesus* is making much better Provision for us: He is preparing a better Country, that is an Heavenly; and a better City, that is the City of the living God, the Heavenly *Jerusalem*. There we shall have Rest from all our Labours, from all our Troubles, and from all our Fears: An everlasting Rest, which has always remained for the People of God: And 'tis the Glory of the *Messiah* that he prepares it for us:
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His Sacrifice procures a Title to it, and his Blood confirms it.

I proceed to consider

II. Our Obligation to Glory in Christ. If we believe the Report which the Gospel makes of all that Grace which came by *Jesus Christ*, nothing but the greatest Hardness of Heart can prevent our Rejoicing. The *Angel*, which gave the first Notice of the Birth of Christ to the *Shepherds*, said to them, *Behold I bring you good Tidings of great Joy, which shall be to all People, for unto you is born this Day, in the City of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord,* Luke ii. 10, 11. All the true Springs of Joy are revealed in the Gospel, which bringeth glad Tidings of good Things; and it becomes us all, to rejoice in the Riches of God's Grace.

Unconverted Sinners ought to rejoice; because here is the plainest Demonstration of Good-Will towards Men: A suitable Provision of Grace: A sovereign Remedy for all their Diseases: A rich Supply of all their Wants, and the fullest Assurances of the Truth, and Certainty of the Gospel Revelation.

Every awakened Sinner, tho', at present, he may have no saving Interest in the Benefits of Redemption, will receive the News of those Benefits with Joy and Gladness.

Christ's Invitation to weary and heavy laden Sinners to go unto him, and the strong Assurances he gives of Rest and Peace to such as make their serious and humble Applications to him, give unspeakable Joy to wounded Consciences: They have the same Effect upon them that the Promise of Pardon has upon a Malefactor condemn'd to die: 'Tis the Offer of Life in the midst of Death: 'Tis Grace to the Unworthy, and Salvation to the Distressed.

But none have greater Reason, and therefore none more strongly obliged to rejoice in Christ, than they who are actually in a State of Salvation, and intitled to all the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace. *They who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, are quickened by Christ. They who were Heirs of Wrath are become Heirs of Glory: yea all things are theirs; things present, things to come; all are theirs, and they are Christ's.* 'Tis because they are Christ's, Members of his Body, and Subjects of his Kingdom, that all things are theirs: Therefore they have abundant Reason to rejoice in Christ. If they can say, *my beloved is mine, and I am his*; they may rejoice with a distinguishing Joy, with a Joy that's truly triumphant.

If the Evidences of their Interest in Christ are clear, and such as give them full Satisfaction, their Joy in him will be proportionably great: They will be transported like

like *Thomas*, and 'twill be the joyful Language of their Hearts, *my Lord, and my God.*

If they begin to call in Question their Interest in Gospel Grace, their special distinguishing Joy will also begin to abate: It cannot possibly be otherwise. Such as is the Degree of the Evidence of their Interest in Christ, such, of Necessity, must be the Degree of their Joy in him as theirs. They are under no Obligation to rejoice in him with an appropriating distinguishing Joy, but in Proportion to the Evidences of their Sincerity, and Claim to Gospel Privileges.

But, tho' they are full of Doubts and Fears, and cannot discern convincing Evidences of their Interest in Christ; still they may, and ought to rejoice in the *Redeemer of their Souls*. Tho' they are afraid that they have not yet complied with the Invitations of the Gospel, and that they have frequently *turned away from him that speaketh from Heaven*, let them rejoice in the Assurances that are given them, in Christ's Name, of Pardon and everlasting Happiness, upon their Repentance and sincere Reformation. They need not Sorrow as they that have no Hope; as the damned in Hell; in Regard, the Privileges procured by the Blood of Christ are still offered them, and *his Blood cleanseth from all Sin.*

IMPROVEMENT.

1. You see, that tho' Christ appeared contemptible to the *Rulers* amongst the *Jews*, to the *learned Scribe*, and *rigid Pharisee*; and tho' the Preaching of his Cross was Foolishness to the *politer Greeks*; yet, to one who is fully convinced of the Truth, and Divine Original of the Gospel Revelation, he appears full of Grace. Such a one discovers in him Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge: Treasures of Love and Compassion. The more that he considers *the Apostle, and High-Priest of his Profession, Christ Jesus*, the more he admires the Wisdom and Goodness of the *Father* in contriving, and the Love and Faithfulness of the *Son* in executing the Design of our Redemption. He every Day finds new Springs of Joy in Christ, and all of them inexhaustible: New Treasures of Grace, and all of them unsearchable. So that tho' the World should present him with nothing but Melancholy and Darkness, he can rejoice in *Christ Jesus*: He has Joy in him that is *unspeakable*, and which no Man taketh from him.

2. As none have so much Joy in Christ, as he who has such a Faith in him, as worketh by Love, and bringeth forth the Fruits of Righteousness; let us not only study

study the Evidences of the Truth of *Christianity*, but let us especially consider, the Obligations we are under to submit to the governing Authority of Christ, and to the many Advantages which such a Submission would intitle us to. Let us not only believe the Report of the Gospel; but let the Report which it makes, have that influence upon Heart and Life, which is its main Design. Let us endeavour to be conformable to Christ, in the Temper of our Minds, and in the Temper of our Lives; that having this unquestionable Evidence of a saving Interest in *him*, we may rejoice with a special distinguishing Joy; *with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.*

S E R M O N V.

Joy in the Holy Ghost.

R O M. xiv. 17.

— *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost,*

MANY are apt to lay great Stress upon the *less important Parts* of Religion: Greater Stress is oftentimes laid upon *things in their own Nature indifferent*, than upon *the more weighty, and essential Matters of the Law*: And greater Offence is taken at those of different Sentiments in these lesser Matters, than at the open Violation of the plain and express Commands of God.

The *Jews*, who were very tenacious of the *Ceremonial Part* of their Law, were much offended that the *Gentile Converts* who

who shewed no Regard for it, were admitted to equal Privileges with themselves; and were apt to censure them very severely, and to treat them with Contempt. And, on the other Hand, the *Gentile* Christians, were apt to make an imprudent Use of their Liberty, laying a stumbling Block in their Brother's Way, and insulting over him on the Account of the Weakness of his Faith. They laid too great a Stress on the Use of their Liberty, and placed more of Religion in it, than the Nature of the Thing would bear.

So that both Parties were to be blamed: The *Jewish* Convert for his immoderate Zeal for *Ceremonies*; and for his uncharitable Censures pass'd upon those of a different Persuasion: And the *Gentile* Christian for despising his weaker Brother; for putting a stumbling Block, and an Occasion of falling in his Way; and for placing more of Christianity, than he ought to have done, in the greater Liberty, in the Use of Meats and Drinks allowed under the Gospel, than was ever allowed under the Law.

The *Apostle* addresseth himself to the *Gentile* Converts, in the Verses immediately preceding my Text. *If thy Brother, says he, be grieved with thy Meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy Meat for whom Christ died. Let not then your Good* [i. e. either Christianity,

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tianity, or the Liberty enjoyed under the Gospel] be evil spoken of. Do not, by too free an Use of your Liberty, offend your weak Brother, and prejudice him against Christianity: For the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

The chief Care of a *Christian*, or of a Subject of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, ought to be to *follow after Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord.* And some of the most valuable Privileges which we have by *Christianity*, are the Gifts and Graces of the *Holy Ghost*; in which every one that is possessed of them, whether in a greater or a less Degree, ought chiefly to rejoyce.

Having thus explained the Occasion, and Meaning of my Text, I shall apply my self to the Prosecution of my Design in making choice of these Words: which is to consider the Grounds of our rejoycing in the *Holy Spirit*.

I. Then, we ought to rejoyce in the Revelation of the *Spirit*. The Gospel is stiled, by way of Eminency, *the Ministration of the Spirit*. 'Twas a killing Letter that was revealed unto *Moses*: but the Revelation of the Gospel, whereof the *Apostles* were eminently *Ministers*, is Spirit and Life. *But Sufficiency is of God,*
saith

saith the *Apostle*, who also hath made us able *Ministers* of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit: For the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life, 2 Cor. iii. 6. The Gospel is the Power of God to Salvation, Rom. i. 16. and worketh in them that believe, 1 Thess. ii. 13. 'Tis wonderfully adapted to promote real Piety, and the Fear of God. The Knowledge of Christ, and the Promises of Pardon and everlasting Life, have a great and powerful Influence. According as his divine Power, saith Peter, hath given to us all things that pertain to Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue, whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these ye might be Partakers of the divine Nature; having escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. The Instructions, Persuasions, and Exhortations of the Spirit in the Gospel, are handed down from Age to Age, as the most proper and successful Means of awakening Sinners, and of prevailing with them to turn unto God. The Gospel contains the things that belong to our everlasting Peace: And they are represented in the clearest Manner: And we are invited to the Study and Practice of our Duty,

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ty, by the strongest and most powerful Motives.

The most laboured Discourses of *uninspired* Men, in Favour of Piety and Virtue, are without Life and Spirit, when compared with the *lively Oracles of the Holy Ghost*. And therefore, the *Apostle* says, *we speak*, viz. the unsearchable things of God, revealed to us by his Spirit, *not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, 1 Cor. ii. 13.

The Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, which were also indited by the *Spirit of God*, are said to be *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*: Much more is the plain, full, and compleat Revelation of the Gospel adapted to promote these great and eminent Purposes of *Holy Writ*. Hidden Mysteries, that were but darkly hinted at in the *Old Testament*, are clearly and fully revealed in the *Gospel*. The Types and Shadows of the Law are succeeded by Grace and Truth in the *Christian Dispensation*. Promises of a carnal and temporal Nature, are superseded by the *Gospel*. Christians are invited to the Service of God, with spiritual and everlasting Promises; *Life and Immortality being brought to Light through the Gospel*.

The

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The *Spirit* has fully made known the Mind of God. After the Ascension of Christ, there was a full Effusion of the *Holy Ghost*, a compleat Revelation of the Will of God. When Christ was upon the Earth, he found a prevailing Indisposition, even in his *Disciples* themselves, to receive some important Doctrines he had to deliver to the World: But after his Death, and Exaltation at the Right Hand of God, he sent down the *Spirit of his Father*, to reveal to them, in the plainest Manner, what before they cou'd not bear the mention of: *To guide them into all Truth; and to shew them things to come*, Joh. xvi. 13. He revealed to them things, *Which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, and which had never entred into the Heart of Man*, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. so that they cou'd say, *we have now the Mind of Christ*, ver. 16. The Revelation of the *Spirit* in the Gospel is so full and compleat, that we do not need, nor ought we to expect any Additions to be made to it, *Rev. xxii. 18.* The Gospel is a full and clear Revelation of all the Grace and Truth which came by Jesus Christ. *He that hath an Ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*

2. We ought to rejoyce in the clear and convincing *Attestations* which the *Holy Ghost* has given to the Truth of *Christianity.*

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Christianity. Our Lord often appeals to his *Miracles*, as a convincing Proof of the Truth of his *Mission*. Speaking of the Infidelity of the *Jews*, he says, *If I had not done among them the Works which no other Man did, they had not had Sin, but now they have both seen, and hated me and my Father*, John xv. 24. When the *Jews* came to our Lord, saying, *if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly*; he answered them, *the Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witness of me*, John x. 25.

Now, our Lord gives a plain Intimation that he wrought his *Miracles* by the *Spirit of God*, when he says, *if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then is the Kingdom of God come unto you*, Matt. xii. 28. *He had the Spirit without measure*, and wrought innumerable *Miracles*, whereby he confirmed the Truth of his *Doctrines*, and the Genuineness of his *Commission*: And his *Apostles*, and the *seventy Disciples*, by the *same Spirit*, *cast out Devils*, and *healed all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Disease*, Luke ix. 1. — x. 9, 17.

But these extraordinary Operations of the *Holy Spirit* were not the only Proofs that he gave to the Truth of *Christianity*. He had yet a more powerful and convincing Evidence in Reserve, which was to be made Publick, after our Lord's Ascension at the Right Hand of God. The famous
Prophecy,

Prophecy of Joel was not yet accomplish'd. Joel ii. 28. *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall Prophesie, your old Men shall dream Dreams, and your young Men shall see Visions.* After our Lord's Ascension, this Prophecy began to be accomplished: For on the Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were gathered together, suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty Wind, and it filled all the House where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it fell upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance, Acts ii. 1, —4. This was the Promise of the Father, which the Apostles were commanded by our Lord to wait for at Jerusalem, before they went out to preach the Gospel, and to bear Witness to the Truth of his Resurrection, Acts iv.

Being furnished with these extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, they were qualified, in a most wonderful Manner, to be Witnesses of the Truth of Christianity. To one was given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom: to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit: to another Faith by the same Spirit: — to another Prophecy,

to

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to another discerning of Spirits, to another the Interpretation of Tongues, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10.

The *Holy Ghost* did not only confirm the Truth of *Christianity*, by imparting these *extraordinary Gifts* to the *Apostles*, but by empowering *them*, through laying on of their Hands, to communicate them to others. The *extraordinary Gifts* of *Tongues*, and of *Prophecy*, were imparted to great Numbers, in the first Age of the *Christian Church*. When the *Apostles* that were at *Jerusalem* heard that *Samaria* had received the Word of God, they sent unto them *Peter* and *John*: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the *Holy Ghost*. Then laid they their Hands on them, and they received the *Holy Ghost*, Acts viii. 14, 15, 17. The *Apostle Paul* imparted the *Holy Ghost* to a Number of Disciples at *Ephesus*. He said unto them, have ye received the *Holy Ghost*, since ye believed? (implying that the *Holy Ghost* was frequently given in those Days) and when he had laid his Hands on them, the *Holy Ghost* came on them, and they spake with *Tongues* and prophesied, Acts xix. 2, 6. The *Church of Corinth* abounded in the *Gifts* of the *Spirit*. They were enriched in every thing; in all Utterance, and in all Knowledge.

1 Cor.

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1 Cor. i. 5. *They came behind the other Churches in no Gift, ver. 7.*

These extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost were the last, and confirming Evidence of the Truth of Christianity: And therefore, the *Apostle* tells the *Corinthians*, who were so abundantly replenished with them, *that the Testimony of Christ was confirmed in them*, 1 Cor. i. 6. and he longed to see the believing Romans, that he might impart to them some spiritual Gift, to the end, that they might be established, Rom. i. 11. This is called the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*: and the principal Foundation of the Christian Faith, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. This was the glorious Evidence that bore down all the Learning of the ablest *Philosophers*, that carry'd irresistible Light along with it. 'Twas this Power of the Spirit of God especially, that made the Gentiles obedient in Word and Deed, Rom. xv. 18, 19. The Power of imparting the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, was that, which eminently qualified the *Apostles* for converting Sinners to the Faith of the Gospel. In how triumphant a Manner does St. Paul speak concerning this Matter? 2 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5. *Though we walk in the Flesh, we do not war after the Flesh. For the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds; casting down*

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Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.

This *miraculous* Evidence of the *Spirit*, is Matter of Glorying and Joy. 'Tis fully convincing, and must needs *put to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men.*

The Revelation of the *Spirit*, and his *miraculous* Attestations to the Truth of it, are great and eminent Blessings to the World; but not the only Advantages that we receive from him. We are oblig'd to acknowledge his continual Agency, his gracious and powerful Influence in our Souls. The following Particulars, I believe, are ascribed to his immediate Influence.

1. The Work of *Regeneration*, or of making us *new Creatures*, or *new Men*. This we learn from *our Saviour's* Words to *Nicodemus*, John iii. 5. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* This cannot be meant of the *miraculous Baptism* of the *Holy Ghost*, which was promised to the *Apostles*, Acts i. 5. which Promise was fulfilled by the Descent of the *Holy Ghost* upon them, on the Day of *Pentecost*, Acts ii. For this was a Privilege confined to the first Age of the Church: *Whereas our*
Lord

Lord speaks of some *Operation* of the *Spirit*, which was to be continued in all succeeding Ages, in Regard, all are excluded from the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that do not partake of it. None can be real Members of the Church of Christ upon Earth, or have Admittance into the Kingdom of Glory hereafter, that are not *born again of the Spirit*, i. e. as I apprehend, that are not made *new Creatures* by the internal Operation of the *Spirit*. The *Word*, indeed, is the ordinary Means of *Regeneration*, according to the Apostle *Peter*, 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. *being born again not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preach'd unto them.* But, I think, 'tis plain, that some immediate Influence of the *Spirit* is necessary to make the Word become effectual.

Under this Head, I will take Notice of an Operation of the *Holy Ghost*, which, indeed, is mentioned as distinct from the Work of *Regeneration*, but is spoken of as always accompanying it. What I intend, is the *Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 5. *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* As we are born again of the *Spirit*, so the

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Spirit purifies our *new-born Souls*, purges them from the Guilt and Pollution of Sin, and so fits them for the Presence and Service of God.

Indeed, the *Apostle* says, this renewing Spirit was *shed*, or *poured out*, upon them, the same Expression which is used concerning the immediate Descent of the *Holy Ghost* upon the first Converts to Christianity: But this will not prove that by the *Spirit* here, is meant the extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*: For considering how much a true Spirit of Piety prevailed in those Days, the sanctifying Influences of the *Holy Spirit* might be said to have been abundantly communicated to them.

Besides, it does not appear that the extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghost* were properly of a renewing, or sanctifying Influence. This was not their direct and immediate Tendency at least; if it had, 'tis reasonable to expect, that where they abounded the most, there wou'd have been the greatest Spirit of Piety; whereas we find it was quite otherwise. The *Corinthians* abounded in spiritual Gifts; and yet they were so far from excelling other Churches in real Piety and Virtue, that they appear to have been abundantly more corrupt than any of them all.

It may be enquired under this Head, what it is that the *Spirit* does in our *Regeneration*.
Now,

Now, tho' none can explain the Manner of the *Spirit's* Operations on our Souls; yet we may take Notice of some *special Acts*, that are either directly, or indirectly ascribed to him in *Scripture*, without being guilty of Vanity or Presumption.

1. Then, the *Holy Spirit enlightens our Understandings*. Not that I think we have any Right to the following Promises. John xiv. 26. *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all things.* And John xvi. 13. *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.* It must be owned, that these Promises were peculiar to the *Apostles*, and to the *Christians* of the *Apostolick Age*; but more especially to the *Apostles*. The Spirit was sent into *their Hearts*, not only to bring to their Remembrance whatever Christ had said unto them, when he was upon Earth, that they might communicate it to the Churches; but also to reveal to them several Points of great Imporrance, which they were not prepared to receive, whilst he was in his State of Humiliation. The *Christians* of the *Apostolick Age*, had also some *extraordinary Revelations* from the *Spirit*, according to the following Words of St. *John*. 1 Joh. ii. 20, 27. *Ye have an Unction from the holy One, and ye know all things.---The anointing, which ye have received of him,*

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abideth in you: And ye need not that any Man teach you: But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no Lie: And even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

The Canon of the Scripture has been compleated long ago, and we have no Ground to expect that any new Revelation will be communicated to us. But we may pray, *that the Eyes of our Understandings may be enlightned.* This was an Office which the Spirit undertook, and discharg'd under the *Old Testament*; which encouraged the *Psalmist* to pray, *open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wonderous things out of thy Law,* Psal. cxix. 18. *Give me Understanding, and I shall keep thy Law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole Heart,* ver. 34. *I am thy Servant, give me Understanding, that I may know thy Testimonies,* ver. 125. The *Psalmist* does not pray that any new Laws might be revealed to him, but that he might have some additional Light imparted to him, whereby he might be enabled to understand, in a saving Manner, the Laws of God already revealed. He wanted a Ray of Light from the *Holy Spirit*, to help him to discover the Wisdom and Holiness, the Necessity and Excellency of God's Laws. Surely the *Psalmist* prayed in Faith, and the *Holy Spirit*

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Spirit that inspired his Prayers, return'd an Answer to his Petitions.

We need not doubt but the *Holy Spirit* is employed in the same Office under the *New Testament*. Our Lord encouraged his Followers to pray for the *Spirit*: *Four Heavenly Father*, says he, *will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. I cannot think that the Meaning of this Passage is this; *If after my Ascension, ye shall pray for the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, they shall be given to you, my Apostles*: I think 'tis a plain Encouragement for every one to pray, at all Times, for the *Spirit's* Aid: There is no Limitation of Time, or of the Number of Persons that were to expect the *Holy Ghost* in return to their Prayers. The Promise is, *every one that asketh receiveth*, ver. 10. Now, the *primitive Christians*, at least such, as were of lower Rank in the Church, did not receive the *miraculous Gifts* of the *Holy Ghost* by their own Prayers, but by the Imposition of the *Apostles* Hands.

I take it therefore for granted, that this is a Promise of the ordinary Aids of the *Holy Spirit*, which we are all of us encouraged to pray for. Christians may pray in Faith for the Light of *God's Spirit*, that they may know the things, that are freely given them of God.

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The Apostle Paul prayed, that God would give unto the Ephesians the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of him; the Eyes of their Understanding being enlightned, that they might know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints, &c. Eph. i. 17. — 20. I suppose, the Apostle prayed, that they might have a greater Degree of the ordinary Illumination of the Spirit. We have a Passage parallel to this, Col. i. 9, 10. *We do not cease*, says the Apostle, *to pray for you, and to desire, that ye might be filled with the Knowledge of his Will, in all Wisdom, and spiritual Understanding: that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work.* It shou'd seem that the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Spirit are not here prayed for*, tho' I own the Difficulty in both Places;

1. Because what the Apostle prays for, is for their own particular Advantage, viz. that they might please the Lord in all things, and be fruitful in good Works: whereas, the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost were chiefly intended for the good of others; as is plain from the following Words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 7. *The*

* The Word of Wisdom, and Knowledge, were Gifts peculiar to the Apostles. Miscell. Sac. Essay 2. p. 41.

Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal.

2. Because the *Apostle*, at a great Distance from *Ephesus* and *Coloss*, even at *Rome*, prays that a greater Degree of Illumination may be bestowed on these Churches; whereas the miraculous Gifts of the *Holy Ghost* (excepting in a few extraordinary Instances) do not appear to have been confer'd upon Believers, but at the earnest Request of one, or more of the *Apostles* then present with them, and laying their Hands upon them, to a right Understanding of the revealed Doctrines of the Gospel.

A Man without the Assistance of the *Spirit*, may, no doubt, read the *Holy Scriptures* with a good Degree of Attention: And this is the Way to improve his Knowledge in Divine Things; yet, it should seem, that something more is necessary to help him to a clear and convincing Apprehension of these Things. Tho' Matters of the greatest Consequence to our Wants, are clearly and fully revealed by the *Spirit* in the Scriptures; I think it must be own'd, that we are indisposed to receive those important Truths, till they are represented to our Understandings in a yet clearer and more convincing Light. *Timothy from a Child had known the Holy Scriptures*; and yet the *Apostle Paul*, in his second Epistle to him, ch. ii. ver. 7. does not only exhort him to *con-*
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der what he had said unto him, but prays that God would give him *Understanding in all things*; i. e. as is most likely, not only that he wou'd communicate more Truths to him, but that he would help him to a clear and satisfying Knowledge of those Things which had already been communicated to him. I think here is a plain Hint at least, that in the great Affairs of our Salvation, more is necessary to our Conviction and Reformation, than a bare Consideration of Divine Truths, as revealed in the Scriptures.

When we read and meditate, we ought to pray for, and to expect the Illumination of the *Holy Spirit*. 'Tis plain, as I observ'd before, that the Psalmist *David* was sensible of the need of this superadded Light; he prayed for it, and, no doubt, obtained it in Answer to his Prayers. Surely, *Christians* may expect much greater Assistances under the *Ministration* of the *Spirit*, than cou'd be hoped for under the *Ministration* of the *Letter*.

This convincing Light is represented in *Scripture*, as having a principal Influence in our *Renovation*. When the *Spirit*, by his *inward Illumination*, gives a right Understanding of Divine Truths, better Dispositions are thereby introduced into the Heart, and all things begin to be new. Therefore, the Apostle tells the *Colossians*,
ch.

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ch. iii. 10. *That they have put on the New Man, which is renewed in [or by] Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him. 'Tis through the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that we escape the Pollutions of the World,* 2 Pet. ii. 20. Besides,

2. The Spirit is expressly said to sanctifie us; not only to set us apart for God's Service, but to cleanse us from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit. The Apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, *that they are sanctified by the Spirit of God,* 1 Cor. vi. 11. And after he has given a great many serious and weighty Instructions to the Thesalonians, and recommended a great many important Duties to them, he prays *that God [i. e. by his Spirit] would sanctifie them wholly: and that their whole Spirit, Soul and Body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,* 1 Thes. v. 23. 'Tis evident that the Apostle was apprehensive that his Instructions, tho' dictated by the Spirit of God, would not be thoroughly successful in reforming their Hearts and Lives, unless accompanied with some more powerful Energy. He thought they would still stand in need of some immediate Influence from the Spirit of Grace; and therefore he broke forth into this earnest, and pathetick Prayer to God on their behalf. *'Tis the Spirit of God that leads*
us,

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us, Rom. viii. 14. *And if we walk in the Spirit, [i. e. according to the Motions and Dictates of the Spirit within us] we shall not fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh,* Gal. v. 16.

2. 'Tis Matter of rejoicing in the *Holy Ghost*, that he establishes us in the Knowledge and Love of God's Laws, and makes the Duties of Religion become easy and pleasant to us. I think this is, at least, a principal Part of the Meaning of the following famous Promise, which was to have its chief Accomplishment in Gospel Times. Jerem. xxxi. 33. *After those Days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Heart.* This, 'tis probable, is done by some inward Impression of the *Holy Ghost*, which effectually recommends the Practice of Virtue, and powerfully inclines to the Performance of it.

3. 'Tis Matter of rejoicing in the *Holy Ghost*, that he furnishes us with Strength for the Battle, enabling us to withstand all the Assaults of our *spiritual* Adversaries. Indeed, the *Christian Armour* is described as something distinct from the immediate Influences of the *Holy Spirit*; as may be seen, Eph. vi. 13—17. *Take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil Day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your Loins girt about with Truth, and*
having

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having on the Breast-Plate of Righteousness; and your Feet shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Above all, taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked. And take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. But then it follows in the 18th verse, *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance.* As we ought not to expect the Spirit's Aid, without the Use of Means that are of Divine Appointment; no more ought we to hope for Victory in the Day of Temptation, tho' we have put on the whole Armour of God, without serious and importunate Prayer for the immediate Assistance of the Holy Spirit; by putting on the whole Armour of God, and by praying for the Divine Assistance, we become *Strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.*

The Apostle was apprehensive, that his Bonds in Christ Jesus might make the Ephesians faint and grow weary of the Profession of Christianity, and that the Knowledge of the Gospel would not, of it self, be sufficient to support them; and therefore, he bowed his Knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying that he would grant them, according to the Riches
of

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of his Glory, to be strengthened with Might by his Spirit in the inward Man, Eph. iii. 16. This, to me, is a plain Proof, that besides the external Assistances of the *Holy Spirit*, we have need of inward immediate Influences from him, to enable us to stand fast in the Day of Trial and Adversity.

4. 'Tis Matter of rejoicing in the *Holy Spirit*, that he dwells within us: that we are an Habitation of God through the Spirit. I think 'tis plain, that this was not a Privilege peculiar to the Primitive Times, and that it cannot be meant of the extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*, where-with the Believers of these Times were so generally replenished.

1. Because none can enjoy the Presence and Influence of the *Holy Spirit*, in the Sense that is meant by his being said to dwell within us, but those that are holy; not only *relatively* holy, as being God's chosen People; but *personally* and *inherently* holy: whereas, a Man might be possessed of the *miraculous Gifts* of the *Holy Ghost*, without being savingly renewed. These things I shall endeavour to prove.

I say then, that the *Holy Ghost* dwells in none but those that are *personally* holy. The Apostle *Paul*, addressing himself, as is most likely, to the better Part of the *Corinthian Church*, (for he speaks to them that are not only sanctified, but justified in the
Name

Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God) charges them to *flee Fornication*, which they were in Danger of being tempted to, by false Teachers and prevailing Custom, from this Consideration, that *their Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost which is in them*, 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19. Now, this is a plain Intimation, that they would become unfit Temples for the *Holy Ghost* to dwell in, if they should allow themselves in Sin, and especially in the Sin of Uncleaness; and that he would leave them, as the *Shechinah* of old was wont to leave the Sanctuary and Tabernacle, when the *Israelites* committed any Abomination, and defiled their Camps in the midst whereof he dwelt.

Indeed, in the third Chapter of the same Epistle, the *Spirit* is said to dwell in such of the *Corinthians* as are called carnal: But it should seem, that by this Expression is not meant such as are wholly under the Dominion of the Flesh, but such as, in Comparison of more eminent Christians, might deservedly be called carnal. This seems to be the *Apostle's* own Explication, when he says *ver. 1. That he could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto Babies in Christ.*

Tho' the *Holy Spirit* dwells in none but those that are *personally* holy; a Man might be full of the *Holy Ghost*, i. e. possessed of

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the *miraculous Gifts* of the *Holy Ghost*, and remain all the while in an unsanctified State. This is plainly implied in the following Words of the Apostle. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. *Tho' I speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels,—and tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing.* I say 'tis plainly implied, that a Man might be endowed with all these *Gifts*, and at the same Time be void of *Charity*, and consequently of all the other *Graces* of the *Spirit*. This is no absurd Supposition; not impossible in the Nature of the Thing*: But 'tis impossible that the *Holy Ghost* should dwell in an Heart wholly unrenewed. *What Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? with Idol Gods? or consequently, with Idol Lusts?*

2. The *Spirit* that is said to have dwelt in Believers, help'd them to *mortify the*

* It must be owned, indeed, that the *Sagacious Author* of the *Miscellanea Sacra*, has plainly shewn, *Essay* 1. p. 117. &c. that there is no Account in *Scripture*, that the extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghost* were conferred by the *Apostles*, on any, excepting Believers: However, this is no Proof that a Man might not have these Gifts, and yet remain unsanctified: Nor yet, that all that had them by the Intervention of the *Apostles* Hands, were inwardly renewed. Baptism was administered to none but those that profess'd their Faith in Christ; and yet, it will scarce be affirm'd, that all who were admitted to Baptism, had undergone a real and saving Change.

Deeds of the Body, Rom. viii. 13. *And enabled them to work out their own Salvation; working in them both to will and to do*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Whereas, neither the *Gift of Prophecy*, nor of *Tongues*, nor yet the *Knowledge of Mysteries*, nor any other *miraculous Gift* of the *Spirit*, were of a sanctifying Influence, being designed chiefly for the *Edification* of the *Church*, 'till the *Canon* of the *Scripture* should be completed, and for the *Confirmation* of the *Truth* of *Christianity*.

Therefore we may justly expect the like sanctifying Influences of the *Holy Spirit*: and all true Believers may be assured, as he is said to dwell in them, that they are already possessed of them.

3. None are allowed to have any Interest in Christ that have not his Spirit dwelling in them. Rom. viii. 9. *Ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, [i. e. dwelling in him] he is none of his.* Surely then, by this *Spirit*, cannot be meant the *miraculous Gifts* of the *Holy Ghost*, seeing they are ceased long ago; unless none have had the Privilege of belonging to Christ since the *first Age* of *Christianity*.

I will add here, that our Lord says, *John* xv. 5. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit:*

for without me [i. e. abiding in them by my Spirit] *ye can do nothing.* Tho' these Words were immediately addressed to the *Apostles*, I think it would be difficult to prove, that they are peculiar to them, and do not respect Christians of all Ages. They seem to me, to deserve the serious Regard of every Christian. If so, this is a further Confirmation of the Point in Hand. Surely, Believers in Christ are in a Capacity of bringing forth Fruit to the Glory of God: But they have no Assistance from the *extraordinary Gifts* of the Spirit; therefore it must be the sanctifying Influence of the *Holy Spirit* that enables them to perform acceptable Service unto God.

4. 'Tis Matter of rejoicing in the *Holy Spirit*, that he unites us to Christ, and makes us Members of his Body the Church. *Eph. iv. 4. There is one Body and one Spirit* *. 'Tis one and the same Spirit that informs all the living Members of the Body of Christ; and therefore, whoever has the *Spirit of Christ* dwelling in him, is undoubtedly a Member of the Church and

* Tho' here, and 1 *Cor. xii.* the *Apostle* treats of the extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*, and proves that the Body of Christ is one, because the *Spirit*, who divides to every Man severally his Proportion of Gifts, is one: We may very justly argue, in the same Manner, that Christ's Body is one, and that all who have his *Spirit*, viz. his *sanctifying Spirit*, dwelling in them, are Members of that one Body, because the *Spirit* that informs all the Members is one.

Body of Christ. He is animated by the same Spirit of Grace, tho' in a different Degree, that possesses the rest of the Members. They have all one Soul, if I may be allowed to speak so, one vital, living Principle; and therefore, which is Matter of great Joy to every one who has the *Spirit of God* dwelling within him, it is not in the Power of any Man, or Number of Men to *separate* him from the Church of Christ. He can bear the vain *Anathemas* of the proud and uncharitable *Dogmatizer*, and can sit easy under the *Censures* and *Excommunications* of weak and fallible Men. As long as he finds in himself the Life and Spirit of a Member of Christ; as long as the *Lord Jesus*, who is the Head of the Body, communicates Life and Nourishment to his Soul, he is sure he is a Member of the true *spiritual* Body of Christ, and of the Number of those who *grow unto an Holy Temple in the Lord*.

5. The *Spirit* is expressly called our *Comforter*. John xiv. 16, 17. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* 'Tis true, these Words contain a Promise of the *extraordinary Gifts* of the *Holy Ghost*,

which had not yet been given to any of Christ's Disciples; and therefore, 'twill perhaps be thought improper to make any Application of them to the *present Aids* of the Spirit. But, I beg leave to observe the following Things.

The Word which we translate *Comforter*, signifies an *Advocate*, as well as a *Comforter*: And I am inclined to believe, that the *Holy Ghost* is promised here, under the peculiar Notion of an *Advocate*, and that he had been enjoyed before, by the *Apostles*, and the rest of the Disciples under the Character of a *Comforter*. The Reasons why I think he is promised here, under the peculiar Notion of an *Advocate*, are these two;

1. Our Lord says, in the 18th Verse, *I will not leave you comfortless*. The Words might be render'd, I will not leave you in the Condition of *helpless Orphans*, i. e. without a Friend to plead for you, and to take your Part against the World.

2. The peculiar Work, for which the *Holy Ghost* was promised and sent into the World, is the proper Work and Office of an *Advocate*. He was promised to be a *Mouth and Wisdom to them, which none of their Adversaries should be able to gain-say*, Luke xxi. 15. He was designed to *bring all things to their Remembrance, and to lead them into all Truth, that they might be*

be able Defenders of Christianity, *John* xiv. 26. And he was sent to reprove the *World of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment*, *John* xvi. 8. Which he did in a wonderful Manner, by the *miraculous Effusion* of a great Variety of *Gifts* on the *Apostles*, and first Converts to Christianity. Thus was the Promise of the *Holy Ghost* fulfilled.

But the original Word, whereby the *Holy Ghost* is distinguished, signifies also *Comforter*: And under this Character, I think, he was enjoyed by *our Lord's* Disciples before his Death, and ever since by all his faithful Servants and Followers.

1. Because *our Lord* tells his Disciples expressly, *John* xiv. 17. that they *know the Spirit*; [i. e. that they have had the comfortable Experience of his sanctifying Influence upon their Hearts] for, says he, *He dwelleth with you*. As he certainly does in all the Members of Christ, *Rom.* viii. 9.

2. Because *our Lord* says, *John* xiv. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you*; i. e. as I apprehend, he left with them, at his Departure out of the World, the fullest Witness of his *Spirit* in their Hearts that they were the Children of God.

Now, the *Spirit* is a *Comforter* to Believers in all Ages in these Respects, as well as in many more. 'Tis he that *sheds abroad*

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the Love of God in our Hearts, 2 Cor. v. 5. That supports us under Sufferings, 1 Pet. iv. 14. And who is the Earnest of our Inheritance, Eph. i. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us be careful not to resist the *Holy Spirit*. 'Tis true, by resisting the *Holy Ghost* in *Scripture*, is sometimes meant unkind Treatment of those who were acted by a *prophetick Spirit*, as *Acts* vii. 51, 52. *Ye stiffnecked, and uncircumcised in Hearts and Ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your Fathers did, so do ye. Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted? and they have slain them who have shewed before of the Coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the Betrayers and Murtherers.* But then it follows in the next Verse, which should seem to be a farther Explication of what is meant by resisting the *Holy Ghost*; *who have received the Law* [dictated by the Spirit] *by the Disposition of Angels, and have not kept it.* If we obey not the Word of God, which he has been pleased to give us for the Rule both of Faith and Manners; if we neglect his Laws, and receive not his Instructions, we shall be reckoned guilty of resisting the *Holy Ghost*; and if at present he dwells in us, he will quickly de-
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part from us; or if he is a Stranger to us, he will remain so, and will not come unto us, and make his Abode with us, as long as we persist in such a Conduct towards him. God grant, that we may all of us live in Obedience to the Dictates of the *Spirit* revealed in the *Scripture*!

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S E R

SERMON VI.

Joy in Believing.

R O M. xv. 13.

*The God of Hope fill you with all
Joy and Peace in believing.*

THE *Gentiles*, before the coming of Christ, were in a very miserable Condition: They were ignorant of the true God, and full of Doubts as to a future State. The *Apostle*, reminding the *Ephesians* of their former *Gentile* State, represents this Matter in the strongest and most moving Expressions. Eph. ii. 11. *Remember that ye being in Times past Gentiles in the Flesh, that at that Time ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Common-Wealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenant of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World.* But not-with-

withstanding this, there were plain Intimations in the *Prophets*, that the *Gentiles* were to be enlightned with the Knowledge of God, and to be made Partakers with the *Jews*, of the Blessings of the *Messiah's* Kingdom. 'Tis written, rejoice ye *Gentiles* with his People; and again *Isaiah* saith, *There shall be a Root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust.*

The *Apostle* prays in the Text, that the *Gentiles* may be filled with Joy in believing the clear and express Revelations of the Gospel, supported by preceding *Prophecies*. They are no longer ignorant of God; his merciful Nature is fully made known to them, and they are well assur'd of his kind Intentions concerning them. Eph. ii. 13. *Now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ.*

'Tis plain that Faith is a main Principle of Joy; the Christian's Joy is greatly supported by it, and has a constant Dependance on it. There is no Joy in God but what takes its Rise either from a real or imaginary Faith. A true and lively Faith fills the Soul with Joy: it greatly enlarges the Heart, and enables the Believer to triumph in God.

I will endeavour,

- I. To explain the Nature of that Faith which

which gives true and solid Joy to the Christian.

II. Shall shew wherein its Influence in creating Joy to the Believer chiefly consists.

I. I am to explain the Nature of the Faith which gives true and solid Joy to the Christian.

1. A bare Belief of the Truth of Gospel Promises, and Declarations of Mercy, may give Joy to an unconverted Sinner, as long as there is any Hope that he may obtain a Title to them. When his Conscience reproaches him, he derives some Comfort from the Word of God, as long as he can assure himself upon solid Ground, that it is not yet too late for him to repent. The Devils are said to *believe and tremble*. Their Faith cannot afford them any Relief, because they are already in Torment, and have no Ground to expect a Release on any Condition, but rather an Increase of Misery. They can derive no Consolation from the Gospel; it furnishes them with no Topicks of Joy. But unconverted Sinners, who believe the Truth of the Gospel, may rejoice, inasmuch as their Salvation is possible, inasmuch as Pardon and Life are offer'd them on Condition they truly repent, and turn to God from all their evil Ways. Harden'd Sinners, indeed,

deed, tho' they may believe the Truth of Christianity, are not sensible of any Joy flowing from the Promises of the Gospel, but they that have any Sense of Guilt, or any Checks of Conscience, feel a lively Joy arising from their Belief of God's Mercy revealed to Sinners in the Gospel.

When the Apostle *Paul* preached Salvation to the *Gentiles*, they entertained the Report, and received the Message with Gladness, *Acts* xiii. 48.

A Door of Hope gives Joy to the guilty Conscience; but the longer the Goodness of God is unprevailing with Sinners to repent, the oftener they reject the Overtures of Grace and Invitations of Mercy, they will have the less Ground of Joy in believing the merciful Declarations of the Gospel: *For that Earth, which, being well dress'd and water'd, beareth only Thorns and Briars, is rejected, and nigh unto Cursing, whose End is to be burned*, Heb. vi. 8. They who often reject the merciful Provision which the Gospel has made for guilty Sinners, are in Danger of being rejected, and left under the Curses both of the Law and the Gospel. That Grace which should reclaim them, is in danger of being withheld; and the Guilt of abusing God's Mercy will probably lie heavy upon them, and leave them comfortless.

2. That Faith which gives the most solid and lasting Joy to the Christian, is such a firm Persuasion of the Truth of Christianity, as engages him to comply with all the Commands of the Gospel. When a Man is willing to part with all for the Privileges of Christianity, and with the Apostle *Paul* counts those things which were Gain to him, Lost for Christ, he is undoubtedly possess'd of that Grace of Faith which fills the Soul with Joy that is inexpressible. That Faith which brings him to Christ; which casts him down at the Feet of his Redeemer, and subdues him to his Authority, is a real Spring of Joy; a true and solid Foundation of Peace. To believe that Christ has laid us under the strongest Obligations to love and obey him; and that by obeying him we shall secure his Favour and everlasting Happiness, will not give us any Joy comparable to that which ariseth from the Consciousness of our having believed the Gospel so as to obey it. That Faith which gives the most solid and lasting Joy, is an active and steady Principle of Works of Righteousness. A barren unfruitful Faith will condemn us; but a Faith, which worketh by Love, and bringeth forth the Fruits of Righteousness, is truly justifying and saving.

Such was the Faith of *Noah*, who believed God, when he said he would destroy the
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the old World, excepting only himself and his Family; and prepared an Ark according to the Commandment of God. Heb. xi. 7. *By Faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with Fear prepared an Ark to the saving of his House, by the which he condemned the World, and became Heir of the Righteousness which is by Faith.* If he had not so firmly believed the Divine Threatning, and Promise of Salvation to his Family, as to prepare an Ark for their Safety and Protection from the Flood, he must have perished with the unbelieving World, and could have had no Claim to the Righteousness which is by Faith. But as his Faith shew'd itself to be a real Principle of Virtue and Obedience, he is rank'd amongst the honourable Worthies who *obtained a good Report through Faith.*

Such also was the Faith of *Abraham*, which was counted to him for Righteousness. He was commanded by God to leave his Native Country, and go to a Strange Land, which, at present, God did not vouchsafe so much as to describe to him, only commanding him to go to a Land, *which he should shew him*, Gen. xii. 1. God also promised him, that he should have a numerous Posterity that should inherit it. *Abraham* firmly believ'd the Promise of God, counting him faithful that had promised.

mised. He obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. Neither his Ignorance of the Promised Land, the Infirmities of old Age, nor yet the Deadness of *Sarah's Womb*, could make him stagger at the Promises of God through Unbelief. He left his Kindred, and his Father's House, and went in pursuit of a Country wholly unknown to him; fully relying on the Power and Faithfulness of that God, who had distinguished him by so peculiar a Mark of his Favour.

Another very remarkable Instance wherein *Abraham* greatly displayed his Faith, was his Readiness to offer up his only Son at the Command of God. God had promised him, *That his Seed should be as the Stars of the Sky in multitude, and as the Sand which is by the Sea-Shore innumerable.* And now he is to offer up his only Son, in a very advanced Age, which would seem to cut off all Hopes of Posterity. *But yet, against Hope, Abraham believed in Hope, and was fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform.* And therefore prepared to offer up his only Son, whom he loved, for a *Burnt-Offering*, as God commanded him. Thus *Abraham's Faith wrought by his Works, and by his Works was his Faith made perfect*, James ii. 22. *And therefore counted to him for Righteousness; and he is honoured with*
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the Character of being the *Father of all them that believe*. So that if we would walk in the *Steps of the Faith of Abraham*, our Faith, like his, must be an active living Principle of Obedience, and not a mere Belief of the Doctrines of Christianity. Such a Faith will intitle us to the Blessedness of *Abraham*, to Pardon and Acceptance here, and everlasting Happiness hereafter.

Some to complete the Notion of *Justifying Faith*, add to the two foregoing Particulars, a Recumbency, or Reliance on Christ, and the Promises of the Gospel: In this they seem to Place the very Essence of *Justifying Faith*, and to derive all their Comfort from it.

Now by relying on Christ, and the Promises of the Gospel, is either meant a firm Belief of the Truth of all that Grace which is reveal'd in the Gospel; and particularly a firm Persuasion that there is Salvation through Christ, and that there is no Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we can be saved; and then 'tis no more than a bare Assent to the Truth of an important Doctrine of Christianity, which falls in with the first Act of Faith already mentioned: Or,

2. By relying on Christ, and the Promises of the Gospel, is meant a depending on them as ours; a believing that we have a saving Interest in them, and that we shall
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be eternally happy for Christ's sake. Now this is only an Application of the general Doctrine, *He that believeth in Christ shall be saved*, to the Case of my own Soul. Upon Examination I have Reason to Hope that I am a true Believer in Christ; and therefore, being previously convinc'd that he that believeth in Christ shall be saved, I rely on him, or promise my self Salvation for his sake. *Saving Faith*, I think, is *prior* to this Reliance on Christ, and not much less distinct from it, than it is from the Grace of Hope, which certainly is of a different Consideration, according to the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. It appears to me, that we must of Necessity be possessed of *Justifying Faith*, before we can have any Pretence to rely upon Christ for Pardon and Salvation: For till I have actually complied with the Gospel Terms, *i.e.* surely, till I am a true Believer in Christ, I have no Ground to rely on him for Salvation; I have no Right to Pardon; no Title to any of the saving Benefits of the Covenant of Grace. This leads me to observe,

3. That by relying on Christ, and him alone for Salvation, is, I fear, by too many deluded Souls, meant a depending on being saved by the Righteousness of Christ, without real Repentance and Reformation of Life. Too many trust that he will save them

them in their Sins, and think that herein lies the peculiar Excellency of Faith; that this is to exalt the free Grace of God, and to give the whole Honour of our Salvation to the *Lord Jesus Christ*. This is a Kind of Faith that will give Joy; for if Men can allow themselves in Sin, if they can adhere to the Service of the Flesh, and at the same Time persuade themselves that they shall be saved by the *Righteousness of Christ*, they will certainly find an agreeable Motion in their Hearts arising from such a Persuasion. But be not deceived, God will not be mocked. Will you acknowledge the Riches of God's Grace in our Redemption? Will you profess to admire the Height, the Depth, the Length and the Breadth of the Love of God in *Christ Jesus*; and at the same Time that you flatter him with your Lips, do you remove your Hearts from him, and devote your Strength, and your Time to the Service of another Master, and pretend notwithstanding, that you are true Believers in Christ, and the only Friends of the free Grace of God, because ye can rely upon him for Pardon and everlasting Happiness, notwithstanding your ungodly and impenitent Lives? What is this but *continuing in Sin, that Grace may abound*, which is a thing so shocking in the Apostle *Paul's* Account? *Rom. vi. 1.* 'Tis a fatal Presuming on the Mercy of God, and the

Grace of the Gospel, for which there is not the least Ground of Encouragement ; but on the contrary, terrible Denunciations of Wrath against all those that obey not the Gospel of the *Lord Jesus* ; that call him *Lord* and *Master*, and yet refuse to do the things which he commands them. I proceed to observe,

3. That by Faith which gives the Christian true and solid Joy, may be also meant *Fidelity* or *Faithfulness* ; a faithful and stedfast Adherence to the Doctrines of *Christianity*, and *Profession* of the Gospel. Thus the Apostle *Paul kept the Faith*. He was faithful to his great *Lord* and *Master*, never deserted his Profession, nor the Charge that was committed to him, but continued *witnessing*, in the midst of a thousand Deaths, both to small and great, that *Christ* should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the Dead, and should shew *Light* unto the People, and to the Gentiles, Acts xxvi. 23. This was the Matter of his Joy and Exultation, especially when he was within the View of his Dissolution. *The Time*, says he, *of my Departure is at hand* — *I have kept the Faith* ; henceforth there is laid up for me a *Crown of Righteousness*, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. In his *Epistles* to the Churches of *Ephesus* and *Coloss*, he wisheth *Grace* and *Peace* to the faithful in *Christ Jesus*, i. e. to those who stand firm in

in the Faith of the Gospel; who adhere to their Profession, notwithstanding the restless Designs of Seducers to pervert them. This is stedfast and unshaken Faith: This is Faithfulness in the Management of Grace and Truth committed to their Charge, and will be counted for Righteousness at the great Day, and have a great Recompence of Reward. Christ will then say unto them, *Well done good and faithful Servants, ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you Rulers over many things, enter into the Joy of your Lord.*

II. I am to shew the Influence of Faith in creating Joy to the Believer.

The Christian's Faith is employ'd about Matters of the last Importance: The Objects about which it is chiefly conversant are all of them Springs of the greatest Joy to the Believer. I shall only give a few Hints, because several of them will be consider'd in other Discourses, and do not so naturally offer themselves to our Consideration in the present Inquiry.

The merciful Discoveries of the Gospel which are view'd by Faith, furnish Matter of abundant Joy to the Christian. How glorious and ravishing is the Message of Salvation, which *our Lord Jesus* was authorized to proclaim to all the World! He came into the World furnished with much

greater Grace, than all the *Prophets* that were before him. The *Christian Salvation* at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord, and was afterwards confirm'd by them that heard him, Heb. ii. 3. He is appointed to preach the Gospel to the Poor, and is sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of Sight to the Blind, and to set at liberty those that are bruised, Luke iv. 18. The Sun of Righteousness is risen with Healing in his Wings, Mal. iv. 2. Here is assur'd Pardon for the penitent; Rest for the weary and heavy laden; suitable Aids of Grace for Christians of every Rank and Condition; a full Provision of every needful Blessing; Grace and Comfort, Light and Protection here, and Glory and Happiness hereafter. Such Discoveries as these, are Tidings of great Joy to the Believer.

But I shall consider the special Influences of Faith in promoting the Christian's Joy. The Observations that I shall make, shall be applicable to one or other of the Descriptions which have already been given in our Account of Faith.

1. Then, Faith is a real Principle of Joy, strong and lively Faith, as it brings things at a Distance into a nearer View, and represents them as it were before our Eyes, and makes them appear to be real and substantial Blessings, certain and infallible Truths.

Truths. Where Faith is wanting, all the gracious Discoveries of the Gospel appear vain and imaginary, and have no comforting Influence: But Faith gives a lively Representation of them, and by that Means conveys inexpressible Joy to the Soul. The *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* gives the following Description of Faith. Heb. xi. 1. 'Tis, says he, *the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen.* Faith enters to that within the Veil, and makes a Report that is as fully depended on, as the Report of one who should rise from the Dead. It gives full assurance of the Truth of all the Divine Promises; 'tis a Degree of Evidence not much inferior to that which is commonly call'd *Scientifick.* *We know,* saith the *Apostle,* *that if the earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands eternal in the Heavens,* 2 Cor. v. 1. Such an assurance, about Matters of the greatest Importance, must certainly give great Joy.

Weak Believers, indeed, are often surrounded with Darkness and Melancholy: The Representations of the unseen things of the other World, wherewith their Faith presents them, are generally dark and obscure, and attended with a great many Doubts; and therefore they are, in a great Measure, Strangers to the Joy of Faith:

at least 'tis seldom that they experience the Pleasure of an *exalted Joy*. But strong Believers, who have a firm Expectation of things hoped for, and see the many great and precious Promises of the Gospel, in a Light that is fully convincing, have unspeakable Pleasure in the Evidence of their Faith: They are transported with the View, and long for an immediate Vision; for the happy Time when there shall be no Darkness to obstruct their Sight: when they shall no more *see through a Glass darkly*, but *Face to Face*.

2. Faith gives Joy to the Christian, in as much as it is the most powerful Principle of an holy Life. The *just* are said to *live by Faith*. Faith in God's Promises encourages our utmost Endeavours to please him. The good Christian believes that *with God there is Forgiveness*, and therefore he keeps his Commandments. The stronger his Faith, the more chearful his Obedience: 'Tis of a quickning Influence, and rouses the Soul from its Sloth and Security, and engages it in an active Pursuit of the many Promises of the Gospel. Faith greatly enlarges the Heart of the Christian, and then he runs the Way of God's Commandments. Faith fires him with the Hope that is set before him, and he mounts up *with Wings as an Eagle*. Faith in Christ especially, inspires the Soul with a Life that is truly divine:

vine: It worketh by Love, and abounds in the Fruits of Righteousness. *The Life, which I now live in the Flesh*, saith the Apostle, *I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. ii. 20. The Doctrine of Christ, his Life and Death, his Resurrection and Intercession at the Right Hand of God, have all a very powerful Influence upon a Christian's Life. The Gospel contains the most persuasive Arguments for a holy Life; and whoever firmly believes the Report of all that Grace which came by *Jesus Christ*, has a Principle of Virtue within, of the greatest Power and Efficacy.

The Saints of the *Old Testament* had not that distinct Knowledge of Christ, nor those clear Discoveries of Life and Immortality, wherewith the Gospel has blessed the *Christian World*: Yet what glorious Acts of Piety are recorded to have been done by them under the Influence of Faith! 'Twas in them a Principle much more fruitful of good Works, than all the Knowledge and Learning of the wisest Heathens.

The Faith of *Christians* has been distinguished by its superior Influence in promoting a *quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty*. It has given the most signal Proofs of its peculiar Virtue in reforming the Tempers and Dispositions of Men. Faith has often restrain'd the Fierce-

ness of the *Lion*, and implanted in its stead the Meekness and Gentleness of the *Lamb*. This is agreeable to what was prophesied concerning Gospel Times. Is. xi. 6. *The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid: and the Calf and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them.* So great a Change shall be wrought in the Tempers of Men by the Faith of the Gospel.

Tho' the Instances of the Power and Efficacy of Faith in reforming Men's Lives are not now so common, as in the Primitive Times; and tho' many, that profess Christianity, are as wicked as the most profligate amongst the *Heathens*, we must not therefore conclude that Faith has lost its Virtue, and is no longer an active Principle of Piety and Obedience: but must rather lament the Want of Faith, which, wherever it prevails in a saving Degree, has always an happy Influence both upon Heart and Life, and shews it self by its Works. 'Tis an active living Principle of Virtue. On this Account, the good Christian has great Joy in believing; for a Life of Piety is a real Pleasure to him, whilst he is under the Power and Influence of such a quickening Principle. *He runs and is not weary; he walks and does not faint.*

This leads me to observe,

3. That

3. That Faith gives the Christian Joy, in regard it enables him to surmount the greatest Difficulties that lie in his Way to Heaven. To have a Principle within that furnishes us with Strength and Resolution, and with every needful Support in Times of Difficulty and Distress, must be Matter of Joy and Triumph. Now Faith has done the greatest Exploits: It has inspired the Believer with a true Spirit of Valour and Constancy, when surrounded with Dangers, and reduc'd to the greatest Difficulties. The Instances of Courage and Resolution, which the *Author* of the *Epistle* to the *Hebrews* ascribes to this excellent Principle, are truly magnanimous, and not to be expected from the bare Efforts of Reason and natural Courage. *Moses* was not afraid of the Wrath of the King of *Egypt*, when he pursued after him; tho' he had not Strength to resist him, nor yet a Way to escape him. *For he saw him, who is invisible, present with him:* And therefore, whilst the unbelieving *Israelites* were greatly afraid, he was calm and undisturb'd, and said unto the People, *fear ye not, stand still, and see the Salvation of the Lord. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your Peace,* *Exod. xiv. 13, 14.* Thro' Faith, the Servants of God have subdu'd Kingdoms: As *Joshua* and *David*, who fought valiantly for the Promised Land, being

being fully persuaded that God wou'd make all Opposition fly before them. Others *have stopped the Mouths of Lions*: as *Daniel*, who believed the Power and Goodness of the God of *Israel*, and cou'd not be restrained, by the Terrors of Men, from the Discharge of his Duty to him. Others have *quenched the Violence of Fire*: As the *three Children*, who wou'd not fall down and worship *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, tho' threatned to be cast into a burning fiery Furnace, in case they should persist in disobeying the King's Command. They were strong in Faith, which gave them Courage, and an unshaken Confidence in God. Their Answer to the King's severe Injunction, discovers the most heroick Courage. *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful, say they, to answer thee in this Matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine Hand, O King, Dan. iii. 16, 17.*

Thus you see, Faith triumphs over the greatest Difficulties, and in the Midst of the greatest Dangers. 'Tis one of the most excellent of Divine Gifts, which is made perfect in Weakness: therefore the Believer can glory, when beset with Dangers for Conscience Sake: 'Tis then that his Faith displays its Divine Power and Energy in a peculiar Manner, and obtains much greater

greater Conquests, than can be hop'd for by virtue of any other Principle whatever.

4. Faith fills the good Christian with Joy, in regard it sets him above this World, and gives him Patience in all his Afflictions. This World presents us with a great many melancholy Scenes, and we are *born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upward*; and the World is an Enemy, especially to Men of Probity and Virtue: And therefore that must needs be a Spring of Joy and Consolation, which has the greatest Influence in supporting us in all our outward Troubles from the World. Now Faith, as I just now observ'd, is that Divine Principle, which makes us patient and submissive in every Trial of Affliction; without which we shou'd often sink under the Burden, and pine away with Grief and Discontent. For this we have the Testimony of the *Psalmist*, who was frequently in Trouble. *Pf. xxvii. 13. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living.* He deriv'd so much Comfort from Faith in God, in all his Streights, that he encourages others to put their Trust in him, after his Example, *ver. 14. Wait on the Lord, be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.*

There is none who has so great a Dominion over the World, as the good Christi-

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an; at least he is furnished with the most powerful Principle of Victory and Dominion over it, if he had but the Grace and Wisdom to exert it. *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith; who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God,* 1 Joh. v. 4, 5. Our Faith in the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel represents God to us, as the most amiable Being. His glorious Perfections are display'd in an eminent Manner in the Gospel. He there shines as the Perfection of Beauty. His Bounty and Compassion, and his unspeakable Love for the World, invite our Affections, and draw them off from this World: And therefore whatever Losses or Disappointments we may meet with here, we can the more easily submit. God is the only Happiness of Man, and his Favour is sufficient for us. *Here, we know, we have no continuing City; but, by Faith, we look for one that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* Therefore we need not be afraid of evil Tidings, need not be alarm'd at the Report of Changes, and Revolutions for the worse. By Faith we are assur'd of *a better and a more enduring Substance*; and so, instead of murmuring and repining, *may take joyfully the spoiling of our Goods,* Heb. x. 34. and patiently endure those *light Afflictions*

afflictions which are but for a Moment, as knowing, that they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Faith in Christ is of singular Service in all our Tribulations. If the World frown upon us; if it hate us, we know by Faith that it hated our Lord before us. *And is the Servant greater than his Lord,* that we should expect to be treated better than he? If one Affliction shou'd follow close upon the back of another, we know by Faith, that our Lord was a Man of Sorrows; and yet he overcame the World, and advises us to take Encouragement from the Victory which he obtain'd over it. We are sure of being supply'd with Strength from our victorious Redeemer: He has both the Power and the Inclination to relieve his suffering Members: *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able, and willing, to succour them that are tempted,* Heb. xii. 18. Tho' we may suffer the Loss of every thing that's dear and valuable in this World; yet Faith in Christ, as *the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him,* will support and comfort us. *God hath given to his Servants eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son,* 1 Joh. v. 11. What can give us greater Comfort in our Afflictions in this World,
than

than that Faith which assures us of the Truth and Certainty of these things?

5. Faith gives Joy, on the Account of its peculiar Influence in recommending all our religious Services to the Divine Approbation. 'Tis the true Principle of Obedience, without which we are incapable of paying Divine Homage. If we believe not that there is a God, who has a *Superintendency* over the Affairs of this World, and who will bestow his Favours on those that fear and obey him, we can have no just pretence to Religion. But if we believe, we have laid the Foundation of Piety and Virtue, and all our sincere Endeavours to live suitably to our Belief, will have the Stamp of Religion upon them, and meet with a favourable Acceptance. *Enoch had this Testimony, that he pleased God; but without Faith 'tis impossible to please him: for he, that cometh unto God, must believe that he IS, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Heb. xi. 5, 6.

6. Faith is a real Foundation of Joy, inasmuch as it is *imputed to us for Righteousness*. Faith is our *justifying Righteousness*. Every sincere Believer is absolv'd from his Sins, and admitted to a State of Grace and Favour with God. Faith in *Christ*, and in the *Father* too, *is imputed to us for Righteousness*.

1. Faith in *Christ*; Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ.*

2. Faith in *God the Father*. *Abraham* was justified by believing God's Power. He was fully persuaded, that what God had promised, he was able also to perform; and therefore his Faith was imputed to him for Righteousness. Whoever thus believes the Power and Faithfulness of God, shall have his Faith accounted to him for Righteousness, in the same Manner that *Abraham's* was: *For it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the Dead, Rom. iv. 21,--24.* In like Manner, in *St. Peter*, the Christian is said to believe thro' *Christ*, in *God* who raised him from the Dead, that our Faith and Hope might be in God, 1 *Pet. i. 21.* This Faith in the Operation of God, who hath raised our Lord *Jesus* from the Dead, justifies, in regard it is not only a believing the Power of God, but is also a Belief of the Truth of the Christian Religion; for if God raised *Christ* from the Dead, he is certainly the *Messiah*, the Saviour of the World; he died for our Sins, and rose a-
gain

gain for our Justification; *and as many of us, as sleep in Jesus, will God, who raised him from the Dead, bring with him, when he comes to judge the World.* As the sincere Belief of these things is *reckoned to us for Righteousness*, we may well rejoice in the Possession of a Grace of so great Importance.

7. Faith is a solid Foundation of Joy, in as much as it has the Promise of everlasting Life. Here I will observe, as I did under the former Head, that Faith in *God*, as well as Faith in *Christ*, will entitle us to Happiness.

1. Faith in God. 1 Joh. v. 24. *Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation, but is passed from Death unto Life.* So also Rom. x. 9. *If thou shalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raised Jesus from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.* To believe this, is in effect, to believe all the essential Doctrines of Christianity, and particularly the Resurrection unto eternal Life: *For he that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall also raise us up by Jesus*, 2 Cor. iv. 14. Those amongst the *Jews* of old, who believed God, were safely conducted to the promised Land. They who did not believe, but murmur'd upon every Appearance of
Danger

Danger and Distress, were, by Reason of their Unbelief, excluded from it. In like manner, whoever now believes in God, shall enter into his Rest; whilst every one, that disbelieves the *Promise that is left us of entring into his Rest, shall surely come short of it.*

2. Faith in *Christ* has the Promise of Salvation. *Joh. iii. 14, 15, 16. As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, shou'd not perish, but have everlasting Life. For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. So ver. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life. And Joh. vi. 40. This is the Will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life; and I will raise him up at the last Day.* We are said to be the *Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 26. And if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joynt Heirs of Christ, Rom. viii. 17.* But then, we are carefully to remember, that this Faith must be an active vital Principle of Obedience, otherwise it cannot save us. If it influences the whole Man, purifying our Hearts, and reforming our Lives, we shall certainly believe to the saving of our
P Souls.

Souls. This is matter of rejoicing; this gives Joy that's full of Glory.

APPLICATION.

1. Let us endeavour after a full Persuasion of the Truth and Certainty of Divine Revelation. Let us not satisfy our selves with a doubtful and wavering Opinion. *A double-minded Man is unstable in all his Ways.* He has neither the Courage nor the Constancy requisite in the Christian Life, *but is tossed to and fro, and carry'd about with every Wind of Doctrine, and with every Temptation and Difficulty in his Way.* Such Uncertainty and Inconstancy cannot lay the Foundation of any Joy but what must partake of the same Nature: It must needs be a transient Passion, and vanish as *a Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew.* A full Conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, will be attended with many happy Consequences, and deserves our greatest Diligence to attain unto it. When we can say with the Apostle *Peter, we believe and are sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God,* we have made a hopeful Progress in our Enquiry. But we must not stop here; we should consult the whole Testimony of God concerning Christ, and endeavour after full Conviction of the Truth of it.

2. Let

2. Let us endeavour to be so fully persuaded of the Truth of *Christianity*, as to give up our selves to the Government and Direction of the *blessed Author of our Faith and Hope*. Let us not only give the Assent of our Understanding to the Truth of the Gospel ; but let us endeavour to have correspondent Dispositions in our Hearts, and a becoming Deportment in our Lives. When the Assent of the Understanding engages the Consent of the Heart, and brings over the whole Man to the *Obedience of Faith*, 'tis then that Faith is made perfect, and a solid Foundation laid for a sincere, and lasting Joy.

S E R M O N VII.

Joy in the Testimony of a
good Conscience.

2 C O R. i. 12.

*Our Rejoicing is this, the Testimony
of our Conscience, that in Simpli-
city and godly Sincerity, not with
fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace
of God, we have had our Conver-
sation in the World.*

TH E R E are many professed Christi-
ans, who, as is evident by their
Lives and Conversations, have no
real and solid Ground of Peace and Joy;
who nevertheless, promise themselves Peace,
and are often rais'd to a considerable Pitch
of Joy. They have deceived themselves
with a Form of Godliness, with false and
destructive

destructive Notions of Religion, and are kept asleep with enthusiastick Dreams and Visions, that sooth the Imagination, and give an agreeable Motion to the Heart, which they fondly mistake for a well grounded religious Joy.

Amongst the several real Grounds of a Christian's Joy, the Testimony of a good Conscience is not the least considerable. The *Apostle* experienc'd its Firmness in a great Trial of Affliction. It supported him at a Time, when false Foundations deceive those that build vain and extravagant Hopes upon them. The Time of his rejoicing was, *when the sufferings of Christ abounded in him, ver. 5. When he was pressed out of measure, above Strength, insomuch that he despaired even of Life, ver. 8.* He rejoiced in the midst of Death. His Conscience made a comfortable Report: It bare witness, that he had been sincere and upright in his Conversation in the World. He had been sincere in the whole Extent of his Profession, and particularly in that Part of it which respected his Neighbour. Undissembled Benevolence and Good-will towards all Men is, what the Gospel is particularly calculated to inspire us with. *Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,*

1 Joh. iv. 10, 11. Tho' the Apostle particularly mentions the Sincerity of his Behaviour towards Men, as the Matter of his rejoicing, he had, no doubt, abundant Joy flowing from the Sense of his Integrity in the Discharge of all the Duties injoin'd by Christianity. His Simplicity and divine Sincerity attested by his Conscience, was the matter of his rejoicing.

The Doctrine is this; *Sincerity in the Practice of Virtue, administers Joy to the Christian.*

I shall,

I. Endeavour to describe this Sincerity.

II. Shall shew that 'tis a solid Ground of Joy.

III. Shall say something concerning the Nature of this Joy.

I. I am to describe the Nature of this Sincerity.

1. He that wou'd be sincerely virtuous, must, with great Impartiality, enquire what it is that God requireth of him. He must enquire with a real Design to admit every thing to be a Divine Command, which shall plainly appear to be such, either by the Light of Reason, or Revelation. He that does not make this sincere Enquiry, may sometimes mistake Virtue for Vice, and Vice for Virtue; and be guilty of things, by pursuing his hasty mistaken Notions,

tions, for which his Conscience may afterwards severely condemn him. This, I am apt to think, was the Apostle *Paul's* Case, when with so much Fury he persecuted the Christians. His Prejudice in Favour of the *Jews* Religion, wou'd not suffer him to consider impartially the Evidences for Christianity. *And therefore he verily thought with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus,* Acts xxvi. 9. And in Pursuance of this Persuasion, *he breathed out Threatenings, and Slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord,* Acts ix. 1. But for this, after his Conversion to Christianity, *He reckoned himself the chief of Sinners, and not worthy to be called an Apostle,* 1 Cor. xv. 9. He sincerely followed his Conscience; for he declared before the Council, *that he had liv'd in all good Conscience before God, until that Day.* Acts xxiii. 1. But as he had not been sincere in his Endeavours to inform his Conscience aright, he was far from being sincere and upright in the Sight of God; nevertheless his Blasphemy and Persecutions attained Mercy, *because he did these things ignorantly, and in Unbelief,* 1 Tim. i. 13.

A sincere Man will go to the Law, and to the Testimony, and meditate therein: And he will pray to God that he wou'd teach him his Statutes, and shew him

what he wou'd have him to do. He will not neglect any of the appointed Means of Information, will never resist the Light, but always lie open to Conviction. To know his Duty to God, and Man, *is to be wise unto Salvation*. And therefore he endeavours, without Prejudice, or Prepossession, to come at the Knowledge of things that are of so great Consequence to him. He is afraid of being deluded by false Appearances of Truth, and of being led into Error by a faulty Bias: And therefore *he proves all things*, and carefully watches over his Heart in his Enquiries, and *holds fast that which is good*. Not but that he still follows on to know the Truth; being convinc'd that he is not only liable to a great many Mistakes, but that he is still capable of receiving more Light, and of making greater Improvements in Knowledge. He is still upon the Enquiry, as he has Opportunities: And if any new Light appears, which either discovers his Mistakes, enlarges his Views, or gives a greater Confirmation to the Truth of what he has formerly embrac'd, he receives it with Gladness, and freely yields to the Force of its Evidence. Thus he discovers his Love, and his Submission to Truth; and thus his Sincerity manifests itself.

2. A sincerely virtuous Man, having been at due Pains to discover his Duty, will ap-

ply himself to the Practice of every Branch of Virtue. ^bIf any carnal Lust, or any worldly Interest interferes with plain and manifest Duty, he presently sets about the subduing of his Lust, and renounces an Interest which he sees will be fatal to him, if pursu'd or adher'd to. If he should only observe the Duties that do not disturb any favourite Lust or Passion; and if he should live in the stated neglect of those, which if observ'd, would rob him of some of his darling Pleasures, 'twou'd be evident, that his previous Enquiries after the Knowledge of God's Will, were more to satisfy a vain Curiosity, than to promote real Piety and Virtue. The sincere Man, who is truly devoted to the Service of God, endeavours after a perfect and entire Conformity to his revealed Will. He makes all his Passions submit to his Authority. He knows, that whatever Divine Command he has under Consideration, the Authority is the same, and that consequently the Obligation is so too; and that if he should break thro' any Restraint laid upon him by any one of God's Commands, and live in stated Disobedience to it, he would be guilty of a Contempt of the Divine Authority, and consequently insincere in every other Branch of Duty. *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, says the Apostle James, and yet offend in one Point, is guilty of all.* The Reason follows;
for

for he that said, do not commit Adultery, said also do not Kill. Now if thou commit not Adultery, yet if thou Kill, thou art become a Transgressor of the Law, Jam. ii. 10, 11. The same thing is true in any other Precept.

The sincere Christian makes Conscience of private, as well as of publick Duties. He watches over his Heart and Life with an equal Care; or rather his Diligence in keeping his Heart, exceeds his Circumspection in Life. *For out of the Heart, unless kept with the greatest Care, proceed evil Thoughts, Murthers, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, False-Witness, Blasphemies, and these things defile the Man, Mat. xv. 19, 20.* Besides he knows, that his Heart is as much under the Inspection of the Eye of God as his Life; that 'tis peculiar to him to search the Heart, and to try the Reins of the Children of Men; *and that he requireth, above all things, Truth in the inward Parts.* These Considerations are of the greatest weight and influence with a sincere and upright Man, but little regarded by the Hypocrite. The whole of his Religion and Virtue, *is to make clean the outside of the Cup, and of the Platter; he is satisfied with this, tho' within he be full of Extortion, and Excess, Mat. xxiii. 25.* The sincere Man endeavours to offer up unto God a pure Heart, as well as to present

sent before him clean Hands; and he is particularly jealous of his Heart, lest some secret Wickedness should lurk within him; and prays to God to discover it to him, and to enable him to live more conformably to the unchangeable Rules of Righteousness, Sincerity and Truth for the future. Such was the Temper and Practice of the *Psalmist*. Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my Heart; try me and know my Thoughts, and see, if there be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting.*

3. The sincerely virtuous Man is chiefly influenced in the Practice of Virtue by Motives that are spiritual and heavenly. The Love of God has a commanding Influence, a superior constraining Force and Efficacy in his Heart; and he endeavours to please him, and to secure his Favour, by every Act of Obedience. This is his great End and View; and this he esteems his sufficient Reward. 'Tis his highest Ambition, and greatest Pleasure, to approve himself unto God in well-doing. *Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness* unto him, especially as they lead him to the Enjoyment of God. If he can but approve himself unto God, and obtain his Favour and Blessing, he is indifferent to the Favour and Displeasure of Men. He knows that their Favour is Vanity, and that their
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Wrath is feeble and confined to narrow Bounds. *Tho' they can kill the Body, they are not able to kill the Soul*, Mat. x. 28. In the Favour of God is his Life: *may his Benignity is better to him than Life*; and therefore, if he can but secure to himself a Title to it, he cares not what becomes of all other Interests, nor what he suffers for the Sake of God and Religion. *He looks not at the Things which are seen, but at those which are unseen; forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; he presseth towards the Mark, for the Prize of the High-Calling of God in Christ Jesus*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. The greatest worldly Interest cannot bribe his Conscience, nor influence him to act contrary to the Precepts of Religion; and whatever Duties he engages in, he does not so much consider what Honour or Advantage it will procure him from the World, but how acceptable it will be unto God, and what influence it will have in procuring his Favour. *They that are sincere, love not Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but singleness of Heart, fearing God. And whatever they do, they do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men; knowing, that of the Lord they shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, for they serve the Lord Christ*, Col. iii. 22, 23, 24. They know that if
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they should seek to please Men, they would not be the Servants of Christ, Gal. i. 10.

The Hypocrites Religion is calculated to please Men; and they make that their great End and Motive. They are Time-servers; can alter the Form of their Religion, not as the Evidence of Truth, but as worldly Interest directs them. *They do all to be seen of Men*, like the Hypocrites, in our Saviour's time, *who made broad their Phylacteries, and enlarged the Borders of their Garments, that they might be thought to be Men of extraordinary Piety, Mat. xxiii.*

5. Thus 'tis the chief Aim of their Religion to have Praise of Men, and not of God; and therefore they have all their Reward in this World, *Mat. vi. 2. 5.* But the sincere Person, who has more Pleasure in the Favour and Approbation of God, than in that of Man; and who, therefore, is as constant in the private Duties of Religion, as in those that are more publick, shall be rewarded openly at the great Day of Judgment. His Faithfulness and Sincerity will be proclaimed to all, and the Remembrance of his Integrity will be a continual Spring of Joy to his Soul. I may add,

4. That the sincerely virtuous Man will make no Professions of Love and Service, either to God or Man, but what are agreeable to the real Disposition of the Heart.

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He will seek God with his whole Heart, and call upon him in Sincerity and Truth. This is an eminent Branch of Gospel Sincerity. *The Hour cometh and now is, saith our Lord, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth, John iv. 23, 24.* The sincere Christian, when he approaches God in order to do him Homage and Reverence, *draws near with a true Heart, Heb. xx. 22. He does not love the Lord his God in Word, neither in Tongue; but with all his Heart, and with all his Soul, and with all his Mind, Mat. xxii. 37.* His Heart thirsteth after God, the living God; and he pours out the sincere Desires of his Soul in fervent Prayer. God reproveth the Hypocrisy of the Jews in the following Words. *This People draw near me with their Mouths, and with their Lips do honour me, but have removed their Heart far from me, Isa. xxix. 13.* If our whole Hearts do not attend our outward Professions of Duty, 'tis feigned Service. *Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole Heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.*

A sincere virtuous Man, who dares not conduct himself according to the Rules of worldly Wisdom, but according to those
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of Sincerity and Truth, does also express the real Sentiments of his Soul, when he makes Professions of Friendship to his Neighbour. He does not endeavour to ensnare him with flattering Speeches, but *speaks the Words of Truth and Soberness*. In a word, Simplicity, and an open Frankness of Soul, appear in his whole Conversation in the World. *He hath put away Lying, and speaks Truth unto his Neighbour.*

Having described the Foundation of the Apostle's Joy ; I proceed,

II. To shew that Sincerity in the Practice of Virtue is a solid Foundation of Joy.

I. It administers Joy to the good Christian upon Reflection, *because he has discharged a necessary Duty*. He has sincerely aim'd at universal Holiness, *without which no Man shall see the Lord*. He has lov'd the Lord his God with all his Heart, and Soul, and Mind, which is of indispensable Obligation ; and therefore he rejoiceth. When a Man has done any thing that was of absolute Necessity to the saving of his Life, the Sense of it gives him Joy : He has prevented otherwise inevitable Ruin, and he begins to have Hope. Thus the sincere Christian, when he considers that 'tis of absolute Necessity to worship God in Spirit

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rit and in Truth, and that none but the Upright can stand before the great Searcher of Hearts, cannot help rejoicing in his Integrity. 'Tis a perfect Feast to his Soul; a continual Spring of Joy. He has faithfully serv'd his God; in the midst of his many Failings and Infirmities he has been pre-vaillingly sincere; his Design and Endeavour has been to please God in all his Ways; whilst others that have made Profession of Christianity, and who would be thought to be in as hopeful a Way as he, have liv'd in the habitual Commission of known Sin, making light of personal Holiness as if unnecessary, and as being effectually supplied by what they call a strong Faith in Christ. He knows this is vain Confidence, groundless Presumption, *Faith without Works being dead*; and therefore he rejoiceth that he can shew his Faith by his Works, that the Truth and Reality of his Faith appears by his Sincerity in Holiness, the necessary and certain Fruit of saving Faith.

2. Sincere Holiness administers Joy to the Christian, *as it is a good Work. A Man, indeed, cannot be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself. It is no advantage to him that we are righteous, nor is it gain to him that we make our Ways perfect, Job xxii. 2, 3.* And our Lord teaches his Disciples the following Lesson.

Lesson. *When ye shall have done all these Things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable Servants, we have done, only, that which was our Duty to do, Luke. xvii. 10.* Yet, surely, the doing of our Duty to our God and Saviour, is a good Work. They have done well who have served him faithfully. They have hereby manifested their Love for God, their submission to his Authority, and their grateful Sense of his Favours. And this well becomes them, and the Sense of it will give them Joy. It was, no doubt, a comfortable Reflection to *Hezekiah*, when he received the Message of Death, that by walking before God in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, he had done that which was good in his sight. *2 Kings. xx. 3.* The Apostle *Paul* says, with triumphant Joy, *I have fought a good Fight.* His holy Diligence and Constancy in his Master's Service did not, like the Service of Sin, give him Shame upon Reflection, but the greatest Joy and Satisfaction. He was sure he had done well in keeping the Commandments of God, and in serving his Redeemer. He was sure he had not detracted, in the least, from the Freeness of God's Grace, by his unwearied Endeavours to keep all his Commandments; but on the contrary, had magnified the Riches of his Grace in every Instance of Obedience, being engag'd

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by his Mercy, and enabled by his Grace, to serve him.

3. Sincere Holiness administers Joy to the Christian, as 'tis *highly acceptable unto God*. Hearty sincere Obedience is a *living Sacrifice, acceptable unto God*. He that draws nigh to God with a true Heart, is sure of Acceptance, for he *seeketh such to worship him*. Tho' the best of Men sin daily, and come short of the Glory of God; yet if their prevailing Design and Aim is to please God; if universal Obedience to the known Will of God is their fixed Resolution and Endeavour, they may depend on God's favourable Acceptance. He beholds their Faith and Patience, their Constancy and Diligence in his Service with Pleasure. Tho' they cannot be profitable unto him, even tho' their Righteousness were perfect, yet their Integrity and Zeal for his Service is well-pleasing in his Sight, and they obtain the Remission of all their Sins. Ps. xxxii. 2. *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, in whose Spirit there is no guile. David was a Man after God's own Heart, because he was upright before him, and fulfilled his Will.* Acts. xiii. 22. If Gospel Holiness is of so great Price in the Sight of God; if he has Pleasure in them that fear him; if such as are upright in their Way are his Delight, happy is the Man whose Conscience bears him witness,

witness, *that he has walked before God with a perfect Heart, and done that which is good in his Sight.* He may well rejoice in the Testimony of his Conscience: What greater Blessing can he desire, than the Favour and Approbation of Almighty God!

This leads me to observe,

4. *That that which is a Man's real Praise, must needs be the Matter of his Joy.* Now Sincerity, or Uprightness of Heart is truly an Honour to such as have any just Pretence to it. They are truly worthy of Praise, who have kept the Commandments of God. Wicked Men may revile them, because they run not with them to the same Excess of Riot; but God will mention their Uprightness to their Praise. *Job was an upright Man, and he had Praise of God. Hast thou consider'd my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God, and escheweth Evil, and still he holdeth fast his Integrity?* Job i. 8 ii, 3. 'Tis said, to the Praise of *Zacharias, and Elizabeth, that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments, and Ordinances of the Lord blameless.* Luke i. 5, 6. 'Tis said in the Praise of *Joseph of Arimathea, that he was a good Man, and a just.* Luke xxiii. 50. 'Tis evident therefore, that Uprightness of Heart, and a blameless and inoffensive

Conversation, have Praise of God, who best knows their real Value. Happy are they who have Praise of God: surely they may rejoyce in that which he condescends to praise.

5. *That must be matter of great Joy, which gives Comfort and Confidence towards God, and Freedom and Hope in all our Addresses to him.* Now, Sincerity and Uprightness in God's Service is of this Nature. The upright Man can appeal to the great Searcher of Hearts for his Integrity. This often administers Consolation to him, when he lies under the uncharitable Sentence of a malicious and censorious World. *Job* was unjustly censur'd by his pretended Friends, but his Sincerity, which was known to God, supported him, and gave him Confidence both before God and Man. Therefore 'twas a brave Resolution, *'till I die, I will not remove my Integrity from me. My Righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my Heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.* *Job* xxvii. 5, 6. *If our Heart condemn us not, saith the Apostle John, then have we Confidence towards God.* 1 *Joh.* iii. 21. We may come before him with Assurance of his Acceptance and Blessing; for it follows in the 22d ver. *and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments, and do those things which are pleasing*

ing in his Sight. 'Tis well known what was King *Hezekiah's* Argument in his Prayer to God for Recovery from Sickness. 2 Kings xx. 3. *He prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which was good in thy Sight.* To this Prayer of the King, the Lord returned an Answer of Peace by his Prophet, He promised *to heal him, and to add to his Days fifteen Years.* Let thy tender Mercies, saith the Psalmist, *come unto me that I may live; for thy Law is my Delight,* Psal. cxix. 77.

Thus you see the Confidence of upright People towards God, and their Hopes of Favour and Acceptance in all their Addresses to him are very great. They know that the upright are his Delight, and that he is perfectly well acquainted with the Sincerity of their Hearts. *For the Lord seeth not as Man seeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart,* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

6. That must be matter of Joy, which will be a Spring of Peace and Comfort at Death; and such sincere Holiness will be. The Conscience of a Man's Integrity in the Service of God, and of a Life spent in his Fear, will administer unspeakable Consolation, when all human Supports fail the dy-

ing Creature. It will give him Courage *when he walks through the Valley of the Shadow of Death*, and fill him with joyful Expectations of a glorious and happy Change. If the Soul at Death is full of Doubts as to its Sincerity in Religion and Virtue, its Apprehensions of Wrath will grow in Proportion; but if the Evidences, on the Part of Sincerity are clear and convincing, its Comforts will flow in upon it, and establish it in Peace. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright; for the End of that Man is Peace.* Psal. xxxvii. 37. *Balaam could say, let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my latter End be like his,* Num. xxiii. 10. *The Righteous hath Hope in his Death,* Prov. xiv. 32. *But what is the Hope of the Hypocrite, tho' he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul?* Job xxvii. 8. How many Men at Death, who find the Want of Holiness, lament the Impiety of their Lives, and pray to God for a Reprieve, that they may have an Opportunity of reforming them, and of living righteously, soberly and godly? Others who have made Religion their Study, and have liv'd virtuously, tho' they are sensible of their many Defects, and confess them with Grief, can take up the following Song of the Royal Psalmist; *I have kept the Ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from*
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my God; for all his Judgments were before me; and as for his Statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also upright before him, and have kept my self from mine Iniquity. 2 Sam. xxii. 22, 23, 24. And when they sing this Song, they have great Calmness within, and can conclude it in those Words of Simeon; *now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace.* As this is the Case of the Righteous at Death, 'tis no Wonder that the Conscience of their Integrity gives them Joy.

7. That must be matter of Joy, *which will stand the Soul in the greatest stead at the Day of Judgment; which will be its Crown and rejoicing, when the Secrets of all Hearts are laid open, and very much redound to its Praise and Glory.* All this may be truly said of Sincerity in Virtue. It is this that will determine our everlasting State. All our pleading that Christ died for us, and that we have believed in him, will prove vain and of no Effect, unless we have had our Fruit unto Holiness; unless we can shew our Faith by our Works. This will be the great Enquiry of that solemn Day. And if we can give no satisfactory Account of this matter; but it shall appear, that whilst we profess'd Faith in Christ, and flatter'd him with our Lips, saying, Lord, Lord, we were disobedient to his Laws, and wou'd not suffer him to

reign over us, he will say, *depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity, for I know you not.* But if it shall appear upon Enquiry, that we have truly loved our Lord Jesus, and kept his Commandments, he will immediately proclaim, *well done good and faithful Servants:* and will say, *I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in.*

Thus, you see of what Importance sincere Piety and Virtue will be to us at the Day of Judgment. Then, *when God shall make manifest the Counsels of the Heart, every upright Man shall have Praise of God.* 1 Cor. iv. 5. How blessed is the pious Man? How solid the Foundation of his Joy?

8. That must be matter of Joy, *which is a proper Disposition and Qualification for Heaven.* Such is Gospel Righteousness, or sincere Holiness. 'Tis the Image of God upon our Souls. 'Tis that which will give us a Relish of the Heavenly Joys, and enable us to maintain Communion with God, and with all the glorious Host that surround his Throne. Whoever exercise themselves to Godliness in this State of Trial, are disciplin'd for Heaven; for *Charity*, the most eminent Christian Virtue, *never faileth.* It is a Quality as immortal as the Soul, and will be the everlasting employment of the Saints. A Soul that's purified

rified by Faith and Love, will appear amiable in the Sight of God, and shall stand in his Presence, and behold his Glory. To the Question, *who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his Holy Place?* the Answer is, *he that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart.* Pl. xxiv. 3, 4. *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* Matt. v. 8.

Here then is a proper Subject of Joy. A Soul that's fit for Heaven, may well rejoice in that Rectitude of Heart and Life, which is its great Qualification for that happy Place; and without which, whatever Pretence it may have to Faith and Knowledge, it cannot be saved, cannot see God.

9. And lastly, that must be matter of Joy, *which will be rewarded with everlasting Life*; and such will be the Reward of Integrity and Uprightness in God's Statutes. Rom. vi. 22. *Being made free from Sin, and become the Servants of God, ye have your Fruit unto Holiness, and the End everlasting Life.* The Apostle Paul reflected upon a Life spent in the Fear and Service of God, with triumphant Joy, particularly on the Account of the Reward of Righteousness which he had in View. *I have fought a good Fight, says he, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown*

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a Crown of Righteousness. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. The Psalmist could say, that even in this Life he had been rewarded according to his Integrity. *The Lord rewarded me according to my Righteousness; according to the Cleanness of my Hands hath he recompensed me.* Psal. xviii. 20. Much more will God reward his faithful Servants according to their Righteousness in the Life to come. *The Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father, with all his Angels: and then he shall reward every Man according to his Works.* Matt. xvi. 27. According as we sow, so we shall reap; *for he that soweth to his Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption: But he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting,* Gal. vi. 8. *In the Day, when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, he will render to them, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish on every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. For not the Hearers of the Law are just before God, but the Doers of the Law shall be justified.* Rom. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16.

'Tis with good Reason therefore, that upright Men rejoice in their Simplicity and

godly Sincerity. A Title to everlasting Happiness is the Christian's Glory and Joy. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates of the City.* Rev. xxii. 14.

I proposed,

III. To describe the Properties of this Joy. I shall only observe, 1. That 'tis a Joy that none can rob us of. 2. That it depends not on other Peoples Estimation. 3. That it is a great Support in Times of Adversity.

1. 'Tis a Joy that none can rob us of. Death that strips us naked of every Earthly Comfort, cannot possibly take this away from us. Death opens the Way to the Consummation of the Christian's Joy. It delivers him from all his Fears, and from every thing that was an Embarrassment in Life; and he enters on the Possession of uninterrupted Rest and Joy. Our Worldly Possessions are liable to be taken from us by Stealth or Violence: but if we hold fast our Integrity, and the Joy that flows from the Sense of our Uprightness, our greatest Enemies cannot dispossess us of it. 'Tis a Treasure securely lodged in the Soul, in the Heart of Man; and if we keep our Hearts with all Diligence, we shall be sure to

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to enjoy it in spite of all that either Malice or Power can do to deprive us of it.

2. It depends not on other Peoples Estimation. As they cannot take it from us, so neither do they give it us: 'tis our own Procurement, and we enjoy the Fruits of it within our selves. Let the upright Man enter into himself; let him search his Heart, and try his Ways, and his own Conscience will make the Report on which his Joy entirely depends. 'Tis the Testimony of his own Conscience, and not the Humours and Fancies of Men, that gives him Peace.

Let every Man prove his own Work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Gal. vi. 4. It is the Uprightness of his Conversation, and the present Temper and Disposition of his Soul, that give him Joy. These Springs of Consolation are entirely foreign to the Opinions of Men, and depend not upon their Caprice and Humour. The Foundation of his Joy has been laid by himself, under the Conduct and Influence of the Spirit of Grace, and the Principles thereof are interwoven with his Soul. He has a Spring of Comfort within, and the Peace of his own Conscience is a continual Feast.

3. 'Tis a great Support in Times of Adversity. I have already observ'd, that the *Apostle* had the comfortable Experience of the Truth of this Observation. When *the*
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Sufferings of Christ abounded in him, the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity he had had his Conversation in the World, gave him no less abundant Joy. A Man's Troubles may sometimes be so great, that he can receive no Consolation from the World; and how deplorable must the case of an ungodly Man be in such Circumstances? But a Man of Uprightness is possess'd of all the true Springs of Consolation. Tho' the World frowns upon him, if his own Conscience does not reproach him, he can both lay himself down in Peace, and sleep. He has an Interest in the Favour and Protection of Heaven; in the Mercy and tender Compassion of that God who will make all things work together for his Good. If his Conscience does not condemn him; does not bring a Charge against him of Hypocrisy and Unfaithfulness, he knows that his compassionate High-Priest, who hath suffered being tempted, is able to comfort, and succour him under the Weight of his Temptation. And he also knows that these light Afflictions, that are but for a Moment, work for him a far more exceeding, and an eternal Weight of Glory. No Affliction can be so great as to be an overbalance to the Joys of a good Conscience. They are in their own Nature solid, and they lessen the Weight of every Affliction.

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No Affliction lays so heavy upon a sincere and upright Man, as it does upon the hypocrite, and the ungodly; those Afflictions that to them are insupportable, to him are light and easy.

REFLECTIONS.

1. If a Man would taste the truest Pleasure, and have Joy unspeakable, he must fear God, and keep his Commandments. Men of Pleasure fly from the very Sound of Piety and Virtue: They think that none are in the Road of Pleasure but themselves. They see nothing but Slavery and Melancholy in the Path of Virtue; but they are greatly mistaken, there is none so happy as the upright Man. He has not only great Pleasure in the Practice of Virtue, but great Comfort in the Review of it. He does not only find that *Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and that all her Paths are Peace*; but he has great Satisfaction in the Testimony of his Conscience, that he has pursued the Path of Virtue, and preferred the Pleasure of Religion to every other Pleasure. Wicked Men have Pleasure in indulging their Lusts and corrupt Passions. Pleasure has an entire Dominion over them, to which they sacrifice their Ease and their Interest: but 'tis only a momentary Pleasure; it dies in the Enjoyment,
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and is succeeded with Pain and Regret. It leaves behind it a crazy Constitution, and a wounded Conscience. It lays the Foundation of Shame and of Torment, both in this Life, and that which is to come. *What Fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed, for the end of those things is Death?* Rom. vi. 21. Solomon, who had run the round of Pleasure, and had every thing in Possession that this World could afford, pronounced all to be but Vanity, yea Vanity of Vanities. After all his Enquiries, and Experience, he came to the following Conclusion *Let us hear, says he, the Conclusion of the whole Matter, fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Duty of Man. For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Eccles. xii. 13, 14. A voluptuous Man, when he gives himself leave to consider that for all these things God will bring him into Judgment, must needs have very uneasy Reflections. And on the other Hand, the upright Man, when he takes into Consideration the Day of Judgment, when the Secrets of all Hearts shall be laid open, has great Joy and Comfort in the Sense of his own Integrity. He hopes to have Praise of God, and to inherit a Crown of Righteousness.

2. I observe, that *true Piety and Virtue* give the Christian Joy, as well as *sound Notions*, and an *orthodox Faith*. The Apostle *Paul* had Joy in the Review of his pious Conversation. Men are apt to make so great a Noise and Bustle about Doctrinal Points, and Matters of Speculation, as if it were the whole of Religion to believe aright, and as if nothing cou'd give Peace to the Conscience, or an interest in the Favour of God, and the Happiness of Heaven, but just Apprehensions of the Doctrines of the Gospel, and a firm Persuasion of the Truth of them. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father*, in the Apostle *James's* Days, was this; *to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World*, James i. 27. But in our Days, if a Man has but an *orthodox Faith*, and espouses it with Heat and Violence, tho' he is remarkably defective in some of the most eminent Branches of Virtue, he shall be applauded as a Man of great Worth, and an excellent Christian. And on the other Hand, if a Man questions the Truth of some Doctrines that have long been reputed sacred, and have borne the Stamp of Orthodoxy, tho' in his Life and Conversation he discovers a truly Christian Temper, and conducts himself according to the Rules of Piety and Virtue as delivered in the Holy Scripture, he shall be

be reputed an Enemy to Christ, and a Stranger to the Covenant of Grace; and it shall be thought a Virtue, a becoming Zeal for the Truth, to load him with opprobrious Names, and to be very sparing in Offices of Good-will and Kindness to him. Thus Repentance, and Reformation of Life, Piety towards God, and Good-will towards Men, which our Lord Jesus came into the World to promote, both by plain and obvious Precepts, and by his own Example, are neglected as unnecessary under the Christian Dispensation; and a Faith, very often not according to Knowledge, accompanied with an uncharitable censorious Zeal, is espoused in the Room of them, and is thought to supply the Want of them.

It is a fatal Mistake. The Design of the Gospel is to make us wiser and better; and wiser in order to our becoming better. If our Knowledge and Faith do not improve the Temper of our Minds, correct the evil Dispositions of our Hearts, and reform our Lives, it had been better for us we had never known the Truth, nor heard of a Saviour. If, whilst we enjoy the Light, and pretend to rejoice in it, we live, as Children of the Night and of Darkness, *in Rioting and Drunkenness, in Chambering and Wantonness, in Strife and Envy*; it will be more tolerable for the

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Land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the Day of Judgment, than for us: we shall perish without Remedy, and without Mercy.

There is, indeed, inexpressible Joy in Believing, as well as in the Practice of Piety, and the Review of a Life of Virtue: But too often the Joy of Faith is *enthusiastick*, as is the Faith itself. It is not a strong Persuasion of the Truth of any Doctrine that is a sufficient Foundation of Joy: Such a Persuasion has often proved false, and has had fatal Effects. The Apostle *Paul* verily thought that Christ was an Impostor, and he did many things in Consequence of his Persuasion to the Prejudice of Religion, which were the Matter of very humbling Reflexions to him as long as he liv'd. And tho' this Persuasion be true, and the Doctrine which is so firmly believed of great Importance; yet, if all, or any of the following Charges, may be justly brought against the Man who is possessed of this Faith, or firm Persuasion, the Foundation of his Joy is not so firm and solid as he may imagine.

1. If this firm Persuasion is not the Result of serious and diligent Study and Enquiry: If he has not, in particular, carefully consulted the Holy Scriptures, and endeavoured to acquaint himself with the plain and obvious Declarations of the *Holy Spirit*: If he has not gone to the Law
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and to the Testimony, with a teachable Disposition, with a Love for Truth, and with a willingness to renounce any former Opinion he may have had a Fondness for, upon receiving full Conviction from the Word of God, that 'tis false and groundless: If his Faith is not the Result of such a Disposition and Enquiry; if he has only embraced his Opinion, because 'tis a fashionable and prevailing Notion, or because he happened to be taught it in his Youth; and if he adheres to it without enquiring into the Grounds of his Persuasion, in the Manner I have just now mentioned, there is this to be said to abate his Joy, that his Faith is owing more to the Climate, and Place of his Birth, than to any Virtue in him: For if he had had his Education among the *Roman Catholicks*, he wou'd, in all Probability, have been a Zealot for the Tyranny and Superstition, for the Errors and Fopperies of their Church; and would have condemn'd the *Protestants*, as much as he now condemns the *Papists*.

2. If this firm Persuasion is not accompanied with Charity for all sober Persons differing in Opinion from him: If he says of Men of such a Character, that they are *forsaken of God*, and *that he has sent them strong Delusions that they should believe a Lie*; or if he thinks that they have not been sincere in their Enquiries; or that

they resist the Light; one would think that what the Apostle *Paul* says, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. should very much abate his Joy, and depreciate his Faith. *Tho'*, says he, *I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing.*

3. If his Faith, or firm Persuasion, is not accompanied with a Life of Piety, Temperance, and Justice: If he does not adorn the Doctrine of God his Saviour in all things: If whilst he names the Name of Christ, calling him his God and Saviour, he does not depart from Iniquity, he has no just Pretence to Joy. He may flatter himself with Hopes, and promise himself the Privileges belonging to Believers; but he shall certainly perish with the wicked, and be cast with the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkness.

A Man, indeed, may flatter himself with vain and groundless Pretensions to Piety and Virtue, and may raise to himself a chimerical Superstructure, without any solid Foundation to support it; but 'tis because he does not carefully search his Heart and Ways, nor attend diligently to the Voice of Conscience. Conscience will make a faithful Report; and if we admit it, we cannot be mistaken. If the
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Report which Conscience makes, be to the following Effect, we may safely rejoice in its Testimony. " By Prayer, Reading, " and Meditation, thou hast carefully en- " quired what it is the Lord requireth of " thee; thou hast sincerely endeavoured " to discharge all those Duties, which, " upon such an Enquiry, appeared to be " obligatory; thou hast been prevailingly " sincere, and hast been stedfast and im- " moveable, always abounding in the " Work of the Lord." This is a com-
fortable Report. For tho' we may be mis- taken in many of our Notions in Reli- gion; and tho' in many Instances we have deviated from the Path of Virtue; yet we are sure of this, that he, that *thus feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, is ac- cepted of him.*

Let us therefore apply our selves in good Earnest to the Practice of Piety. Let us renounce all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts; and let us live righteously, soberly and godly. Thus we shall infallibly lay a solid Foundation for Peace and Joy. And without this Foundation, we can only have a deceitful Peace, and imaginary Joys; and our Pain and Anguish at last, will be heightened with the Greatness of the Disappointment.

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S E R M O N VIII.

Christ the great Christian Prophet.

H E B. i. 1, 2.

God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days, spoken unto us by his Son.

THIS *Epistle* seems to be writ with a particular Design to keep the Jewish Christians from Apostatizing from Christ to Moses, to which they were much inclined. They had a great Veneration for Moses, and were exceeding zealous for the Law; and therefore the Apostle sets himself to recommend Christ and Christianity to them; which he does in the most masterly Manner, and with the greatest

greatest *Wisdom* and *Prudence*. Tho' it was his main Design to shew that *Christ* is a greater *Prophet* and *Lawgiver* than *Moses*, he does not begin with the direct Proof of this, lest the *Hebrews* should be too much irritated by so odious a Comparison, but endeavours, in the first Place, to shew his Preheminence even to *Angels*, who, he tells them, deliver'd the *Law* at *Mount Sinai*, ch. ii. ver. 2. and then proceeds to speak his Mind plainly, and to tell them in expresse Terms, that he is greater than *Moses*; whom, nevertheless, he commends for his *Faithfulness* in the Management of the Truth that was committed to him. *Wherefore, holy Brethren*, says he, *Partakers of the heavenly Calling, consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our Profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his House. For this Man was counted worthy of more Glory, than Moses, inasmuch as he, who hath builded the House, hath more Honour than the House. And Moses verily was faithful in all his House, as a Servant, for a Testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his House*, Heb. iii. 1, 2, 3, 5. Indeed *Moses* must be reckoned amongst the *Prophets* spoken of at the Beginning of the *Epistle*; but the Apostle forbears then to name him, that he might

avoid giving offence, and presently enters upon the Proof of the Son's Pre-eminence to *Angels*.

In the *Text* there are some things that require a particular Explication.

God who at sundry Times, &c. the strict and literal Translation is, God who in several Parts and Portions, or by several Steps and Degrees, &c. Light brake forth gradually, and in such a Proportion, as was best suited to the State and Condition of Men, and the Design of *God* in making a Revelation to the World.

Prophefying was almost peculiar to *Abraham* and his Descendants; for tho' *Enoch* is said to have *Prophefied*, *Jude ver. 14.* and tho' *Noah* is said to have been a *Preacher of Righteousness*, *2 Pet. ii. 5.* yet the first time that we meet with the word *Prophet*, in the *Old Testament*, we find it apply'd to *Abraham*. *Abraham is a Prophet*, saith *God* to *Abimelech*, and he shall pray for thee, *Gen. xx. 7.* *God* often appeared to him, and revealed his Will to him; and he was not negligent to declare it to his Children. *Shall I hide*, saith *God*, *from Abraham the things which I do? for I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment*, *Gen. viii. 17, 19.* *God* made Choice of the Dependants of *Abraham* for

a peculiar People to himself, by whom he intended to propagate Light and Grace to all the Nations of the Earth. *I will not hide*, says he, *from Abraham the thing which I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him.*

Jacob is the next that prophesied; and a greater Measure of the *Prophetick Gift* was bestowed on him, than had been bestowed upon *Abraham*. He called all his Sons together, to tell them what should be in the last Days; and particularly described the Condition of their Posterity in future Times; and pointed at the Time, before which the *Messiah* should appear to the World, in that famous *Prophecy*, wherein he foretold, *that the Scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until Shiloh should come*, Gen. xlix.

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After him, there arose a great Prophet in *Israel*, even *Moses* the *Servant of the Lord*; with whom *God* conversed *Face to Face*, as a *Man* speaketh unto his Friend, *Exod. xxxiii. 11. i. e. plainly and familiarly*; I say he spake to him *plainly*; not in a *Vision* or a *Dream*, but by a distinct and audible Voice. *The Lord said, hear now my Words: if there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make my self known unto*

unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream. My Servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine House; with him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, [or Face to Face] even apparently, and not in dark Speeches, Num. xii. 6, 7, 8. What clear and comfortable Declaration did God make to Moses, when he went to him in the Mount, with the two Tables of Stone! The Lord stood with him, and proclaimed the Name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, and Transgression, and Sin, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7.

God did not only converse with him clearly, but familiarly. God is said to have spoken Face to Face, with all the Israelites in the Mount, Deut. v. 4. i. e. openly, clearly and distinctly; but then, as it is there added, it was out of the Midst of the Fire, which struck a great Terror into them: whereas he spake unto Moses out of a glorious and comfortable Light, which gave him high Satisfaction. Besides, Moses had the Privilege of consulting the Divine Majesty, whenever he pleased; whereas other Prophets had particular Discoveries imparted to them, at such Times only, as God thought good. When certain Men, that
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were defiled by the dead Body of a Man came unto *Moses*, and expostulated with him about their being denied the Liberty, which others had, of eating of the *Passover*, we are told that he said unto them, *stand still, I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you*, Num. ix. 8. These words plainly intimate, that *Moses* might go into the *Holy Place*, when he pleased, to enquire of God. When God gave Directions about building the *Tabernacle*, he promised that he would *meet with him there, and commune with him from above the Mercy-seat*, Exod. xxv. 22.

Thus the great *Prophet Moses* had clear and familiar Communications from the *Divine Majesty*; and God bears him Witness, that he was *faithful in all his House*, i. e. he faithfully acquainted the Children of *Israel* with all the Revelations which God made known unto him; or as the Scripture expresses it, *he spake unto the Children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him in Commandment unto them*. But yet being the Mediator of a temporal Covenant only, the Revelations he was charg'd with, were generally of a low and carnal Nature; they were only *Shadows of good Things to come*. Tho' it cannot be well denied, that this great *Prophet* had a more particular Revelation concerning the *Messiah*, than any that we meet

meet with before his Time. His *Coming*, and the greatness of his *Authority* is revealed to him in the following remarkable Prophecy. *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my Words which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him, Deut. xviii. 18, 19.*

But for all this, the Bulk of the *Mosaick Revelations* and *Institutions* were obscure; and the true Purport and Design of them was hid under Shadows and dark Resemblances. 'Tis expressly said of *Moses*, that he put a *Veil* over his Face, that the Children of *Israel* could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished, 2 Cor. iii. 13.

After him, therefore, God raised up other *Prophets*, who began to speak in the Language of the *Gospel*; recommending spiritual Obedience, and shewing the Vanity of relying on mere external Rites and Ceremonies. *Samuel* is the first that depreciated Sacrifices, and admonished the People of the much greater Excellency of Obedience to the Laws of God. When *Saul* was sent against the *Amalekites*, he was expressly commanded to slay both *Man and Woman, Infant and Suckling, Ox and Sheep,*

Sheep, Camel and Ass: but he rebelled against the Word of the Lord, sparing the best of the Sheep, and of the Oxen, and of the Fatlings, and of the Lambs; and excused himself to Samuel, by saying, that the People spared the best of the Sheep, and of the Oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord in Gilgal, and utterly destroyed the rest. This was a plausible Pretence; but Samuel shew'd the Weakness and Folly of it, by replying, hath the Lord as great Delight in Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams, 1 Sam. xv. 15,--22.

This was a most Divine Admonition, which we find frequently inculcated by the succeeding *Prophets*. See particularly *Pf. l. 1--17. & li. 16, 17. Is. i. 10,--21. Jerem. vii. 21, 22, 23. Hos. vi. 6. Micah vi. 7, 8.*

As to the Doctrine of Repentance for the Remission of Sins; it appears highly probable, that in the *Law of Moses*, as understood according to the Letter, there was no true Justification at all, or Remission of Sins reaching beyond this Life, ever set forth: but then, I think, that the *Prophets* that succeeded *Moses*, preached the Doctrine of Justification in the best and most important Sense, clearly and plainly; but yet not in so convincing a Manner to the *Jews*, who were a carnal People, and stuck

much in the Letter of the Law, as was afterwards done by the Preaching of *John Baptist*, our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*.

The *royal Prophet David*, seems to have had an Eye to Justification in the true and proper Sense, in the lith. *Psalms*, which he composed on the Account of the Sins of Murder and Adultery, whereof he had been guilty. There were no Sacrifices appointed by the *Law* for these Sins; he, who offended in either of these Instances, was order'd to be put to Death: but *David* being the *supreme Ruler* over *Israel*, cou'd be in no fear of Punishment from Men, who had no Power over him; and therefore, unless he was apprehensive of being cut off by the immediate Hand of God, which does not seem likely, because many of the *Kings* of *Israel* were guilty of *Idolatry*, which by the *Law* was to be punished with Death; and yet there are but few, if any Instances of their being destroyed by an immediate Stroke from Heaven for their *Idolatry*: I say, it does not appear likely that *David* was afraid that God himself wou'd execute the *Law* upon him; and therefore why shou'd it not be thought reasonable to believe, that he was an humble Suppliant for Pardon as to future Life-Concerns, from a full Persuasion that God would have so great a Regard for a broken Heart, and a contrite Spirit,

rit, as to forgive the eternal Punishment of the Life to come, to which he had render'd himself so very obnoxious?

I must own, indeed, that there are other Mercies which he had likewise in View, and for which he earnestly prayed. He prayed that God would raise him out of his dejected State; *make me to hear,* says he, *Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.* And he prays that he may not be rejected from being any longer King, and that God would not deprive him of the Gift of his *Holy Spirit*, wherewith he had anointed him. *Cast me not away,* says he, *from thy Presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.* But for all this, I cannot but incline to think, that his earnest and repeated Cries for Mercy, were more the Effect of his Apprehensions of future and eternal Misery, than of any present temporal Calamity; and shew that he was not without Hopes of being received, upon his sincere Repentance, to the fullest Favour of God, in the Life to come.

The *Apostle Paul*, discoursing concerning Justification without Works, *i. e.* true and proper Justification, as to future Life-Concerns, quotes the following Passage out of one of the Psalms of *David*. *Blessed is he, whose Transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is covered. Blessed is the Man, to whom*

the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose Spirit there is no Guile, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. Now, it should seem, that the *Psalmist* is here describing the same Blessedness of Justification, that the *Apostle* is treating of, *i. e.* the Blessedness of being forgiven the Punishment due to Sin in the Life to come; otherwise, if he only speaks of temporal Remission, or temporal Blessedness upon Repentance, I do not see that his Words would be so full to the *Apostle's* Purpose.

I think the *Evangelical Prophet Isaiah*, preacheth the true and proper Doctrine of the Remission of Sins, in stronger and more convincing Terms, than the *Prophet David*. *Let the wicked, says he, forsake his Ways, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Is. lv. 7. I think 'tis not the Meaning of the *Prophet*, in this Place, that God will pardon *National* Sins, upon a *National* Repentance; but that he will pardon the *particular* Sins, of *particular* Persons, if they truly and sincerely repent; and the Forgiveness that is here promised, is, as I apprehend, the Forgiveness of future and eternal Punishment especially. You see the *Prophet* is exhorting them to a thorough Repentance; they are not only exhorted to forsake their outward evil Practices, but
their

their sinful and unrighteous Thoughts; and upon this Condition, they have the Promise of a thorough and complete Forgiveness; God will have Mercy on such a repenting Sinner, says the *Prophet*, yea, says he, he will abundantly pardon him. Can this signify any thing less than the Remission of future and eternal Punishment, as well as of present and temporal Calamity?

Thus, you see, the Doctrine of Repentance, was gradually revealed to the *Fathers* by the *Prophets*; but yet, the most satisfactory, and demonstrative Evidence of the Truth of this important Doctrine, was reserved for the Preaching of *John Baptist*, of our *Saviour*, and of his *Apostles*; as I hope to shew, in the Sequel of this Discourse.

I shall now proceed with my Observations, relating to the gradual Light that broke out concerning the *Messiah*, that was promised to *Israel*.

I have observ'd, that God revealed to *Abraham*, that all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed in him; which Promise was afterwards renewed to *Isaac*, and to *Jacob*. I have also observ'd, that *Jacob* prophesied of a limited Time, within which the *Blessed Seed* should make his Appearance in the World; and that *Moses* taught the People some things concerning his

Character and Authority. *Moses* spake only of his bearing Rule over *Israel*, but the *Prophet David* goes a great deal farther, and from the Mouth of God, assigns him the whole World for his Empire and Dominion, in the second Psalm and eighth Verse; *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for thy Possession.* *Daniel* prophesies yet more fully of Christ's universal Kingdom; I saw, says he, in the *Night Visions*, and behold, one like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him: his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, Dan. vii. 13, 14.

We have seen how the *Prophets* advanced Step by Step, to reveal the *Prophetick* and *Kingly* Power of Christ; let us now consider the gradual Method that was taken, to make known his *Death* and *Sufferings*.

After what is said in the third of *Genesis*, of the *Serpent's* bruising the Heel of the Seed of the Woman, the *Psalmist David*, I think, is the first that prophesies
any

any thing concerning the *Sufferings* of *Christ*, and this he does most evidently, in the twenty second *Psalms*. The following things were literally fulfill'd in *Christ*, and are not to be met with in the History of *David*. *They pierced*, says he, *my Hands and my Feet, they parted my Garments among them, and cast Lots upon my Vesture*. *David* only prophesies that the *Messiah* should be crucified; but after him, the Prophet *Isaiah* plainly foretold that he was to suffer as a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World. *He is despised*, says he, *and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief: and we hid as it were our Faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. — He was taken from Prison and from Judgment: and who shall declare his Generation? for he was cut off out of the Land of the Living: for the Transgression of my People was he stricken, Is.* lili. 3. 8.

Thus you see, how by several Steps and Degrees, God made known his Mind to his People *Israel*. I might have been a great deal more particular, but this short Specimen I have given you, I hope, sufficiently illustrates the Expression in the Text, that I have been endeavouring to explain.

I now proceed to shew, how God spake in divers Manners, to the *Fathers* by the *Prophets*. He revealed his Mind in divers Manners, to the *Prophets*; some of which were dark and obscure; others more clear and intelligible; and according to the Nature of the Revelations made to the *Prophets*, such was the Instruction which the *People* received from them.

One Way of God's discovering his Mind to the *Prophets*, and by them to the *People*, was by a *Vision*; i. e. "by representing Things to them, when they were
" awake, as if they had perceived them by
" their Senses; which at that Time were
" lock'd up, and all transacted by a Di-
" vine Operation upon their Mind and I-
" magination. *"

God revealed himself to *Abraham* after this Manner, *Gen. xv. 1. The Word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a Vision, saying, fear not Abraham; I am thy Shield,*

* See Bishop *Patrick* on *Numb. xii. 6.*

and thy exceeding great Reward. He appear'd also to *Jacob in the Visions of the Night*, Gen. xlv. 2. It was a common Method with God, to communicate his Mind to his *Prophets* in a *Vision*: *Isaiah* saw the Lord in a *Vision*, and heard his Voice; compare *Is.* i. 1. and vi. 1. 8. and the *Prophet Ezekiel*, "When a Captive in *Chaldea* had the State of *Jerusalem*, as it was then in Fact, set before him; whither he was brought in the Visions of God, *Ezek.* viii. *"

God also revealed his Mind to his *Prophets* in a *Dream*; see *Gen.* xxxi. 10, 11. and *Dan.* viii. 16, 17, 18.

God also frequently revealed his Will to his *Prophets* in *Parables*, and *Enigmatical Representations*: Such, for Instance, was the *great Eagle* in *Ezekiel*, that is represented cropping off the Top of a Cedar in *Lebanon*, and carrying it into a Land of *Traffick*; and afterwards taking of the Seed of the Land, and planting it in a fruitful Field, *Ezek.* xvii. 1.---11. And such was the *Wall*, and the *Plumb-Line*, and the *Basket of Summer Fruit*, which *Amos* saw.

It must be observ'd, that these *Parabolical Representations* were generally interpreted to the *Prophets*.

* See Dr. *William's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lecture.

This leads me to speak of another Way, whereby God revealed his Mind to his *Prophets*, and that was by a Still Voice, when they were awake, and had the free Use of their Senses.

This Voice proceeded, either immediately from God, or from his *Angel*.

1. I say, the Voice that was heard by the *Prophets*, when they were awake, was, probably, sometimes the Voice of God himself, who generally appeared in a flaming Manner like Fire, exceeding bright, and with an amazing Splendor; which Appearance of the *Divine Majesty*, is frequently, in Scripture, called *the Glory of the Lord*. This glorious Light, as I apprehend, comprehended both the Lord himself and a numerous Retinue of Angels. The Light that appeared, as I take it, was a Company of Angels, in the midst of which God, who is invisible, had his Habitation. 'Tis expressly said, *that he maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a Flame of Fire*, Ps. civ. 4. and *that a Fire goeth before him and burneth up his Enemies round about him*, Ps. xcvi. 3. And 'tis said, that *Fire* out of his Mouth devoured, and that he rode upon a *Cherub* and did flie, and thro' the Brightness before him, Coals of Fire were kindled, 2 Sam. xxii. 9, 11, 13. 'Tis also said, Ps. lxxviii. 17. *that the Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of*

of Angels, and that the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the Holy Place. When this glorious Light appeared, 'tis not altogether unlikely, that God sometimes spake with a loud Voice himself. Thus, when the *burning Bush* appeared to *Moses*, it should seem, that the Lord spake to him himself. 'Tis said, that when the Lord saw that *Moses* turned aside to see the great Sight why the Bush was not burned, God called to him out of the Midst of the burning Bush, (i. e. out of the Midst of a Company of Angels) and said, *Moses, Moses, &c.* 'Tis plain the *Angels* were present, when the Most High uttered his Voice; for before he spake, 'tis said, that the Angel of the Lord appeared unto *Moses* in a Flame of Fire out of the Midst of the Bush, *Exod. iii. 2, 3, 4.*

When the Prophet *Isaiah* saw the Lord in a Vision, 'tis not only said, that he heard one of the *Seraphims* speak unto him, but that he also heard the Voice of the Lord, *If. vi. 1, 7, 8.*

Tho' 'tis not improbable, that God sometimes spake himself to the *Prophets*; yet, I own, tis most likely, that generally, when he is said to have appeared, and to have spoken to them, 'tis only meant that the Glory of the Lord, or the *Shekinah* appeared; and that some of the *Angels* that were present, uttered the Voice.

'Tis plain, I think, that God renewed his Covenant with *Abraham*, by the Mediation of an *Angel*. *The Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven, saying, by my self have I sworn, saith the Lord—that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy Seed as the Stars of the Heaven, and as the Sand which is upon the Sea-shore; and thy Seed shall possess the Gate of his Enemies; and in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my Voice, Gen. xxii. 15---18.*

It is said, *Gen. xviii. 1.* that *the Lord appeared unto Abraham in the Plains of Mamre*; and *ver. 13.* *That the Lord said unto Abraham, wherefore did Sarah laugh?* And yet, a careful Attention to the whole History contained in the eighteenth and nineteenth Chapters, will incline one to think, that all was transacted by *Angels*, in the Shape of Men. They say unto *Abraham, where is Sarah thy Wife?* and he said, *behold, in the Tent.* And he said, (i. e. as is probable, the Principal of the three Angels) *I will certainly return unto thee according to the Time of Life, and lo, Sarah thy Wife shall have a Son:* upon this *Sarah* laughed within herself; and the *Lord* said, (i. e. the principal *Angel*, who had just spoken before) *wherefore did Sarah laugh? — at the time appointed I will*

will return unto thee according to the Time of Life, and Sarah shall have a Son. It follows in the sixteenth and seventeenth Verses, *and the Men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom, and Abraham went with them to bring them on the Way, and the Lord said,* (viz. as they were going on the Way) *shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* It appears probable to me, that by *the Lord*, here, is meant the principal *Angel*, (who is all along represented as the Spokes-man, or chief Messenger from God) for there is yet no Account of the *Angels* having left *Abraham*; that follows in *ver. 22.* where it is said, that *the Men turned their Faces from thence, and went toward Sodom.* It is said, indeed, immediately after, that *Abraham stood yet before the Lord*, which may incline some to think, that the *Lord* was with *Abraham*, when what is above related was transacted, as well as the three *Angels*; and that therefore, where it is said *the Lord spake unto Abraham*, it is meant that the Lord in Person spake, and not one of the three *Angels* as his Minister and Representative: But, I am apt to think, it was one of the three *Angels*; for tho' it is said, that *the Men turned their Faces from thence, and went toward Sodom*, viz. to destroy it; it appears probable, that only two of them went to execute that Commission, and that the

the chief of them, who seems to have been charg'd in a particular manner, with the Message to *Abraham*, was still with him; for 'tis plain that only two of the *Angels* went to *Sodom*, as may be seen, *Gen.* xix. 1.

When the *Glory of the Lord* appeared upon *Mount-Sinai*, 'tis plain that the external Representation was made up of a Company of *Angels*, and that they, (tho' God himself was present, and is said to have spoken,) were the Ministers employed in giving the Law. *St. Stephen* tells the *Jews*, that *they have received the Law by the Disposition of Angels*, *Acts* vii. 53. And the *Apostle Paul*, in his *Epistle to the Galatians*, ch. iii. ver. 19. affirms, that *the Law was ordained, or administred, by Angels*. And the *Apostle to the Hebrews* says, that *the Word spoken by Angels was steadfast*, i. e. the Law, as is not only evident from the Context, but from what I have just now quoted from *St. Stephen*, and *St. Paul*.

Upon the whole, as God is said to have conducted *the Children of Israel* out of *Egypt*, into the Land of *Canaan* by an *Angel*; so, I think, it appears not unlikely, that he delivered a great many of his Instructions to his *Prophets*, by the Ministry of *Angels*.

But

But there were *Prophets*, that had neither *Visions*, *Dreams*, nor *Symbolical Representations*; and who neither heard the *Voice of God*, nor of his *Angels*, but had Revelations communicated to them immediately by the *Spirit of God*. The *Psalms of David*, in particular, were indited by the *Holy Spirit*; and the several *Prophecies* that we meet with, relating to the *Kingdom of the Messiah*, and the *Mysteries of Christianity*, were, in all Probability, dictated by the same *Spirit*. *Prophecy*, says the *Apostle Peter*, came not in old Time, by the Will of Man; but Holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21.

Thus, I think, I have sufficiently shewn, how God spake in divers Manners, unto the *Fathers*, by the *Prophets*.

There now remains nothing in the *Text*, that needs any Explication, excepting the Expression *in these last Days*. Now to me it seems indifferent, whether by the *last Days*, we understand the last of the four *temporal Monarchies* spoken of by *Daniel*, or the last Days of the *Jewish State*, or the Days of the *Messiah*: They may signify any, or even all of these Periods, for they were all co-incident; only the Days of the *Messiah* are of the longest Extent. It is certain that the Son of God was himself the promised *Messiah*; and that he appeared

appeared after the Overthrow of the *Babylonish, Medo-Persian, and Grecian Monarchies*, and when the *Romans* had extended their Dominion over all the World, and a few Years before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and of the whole *Jewish Commonwealth*; so that there is no Necessity of restraining the Meaning of the *last Days*, to any one of these Periods.

I now proceed to raise a Doctrinal Observation from the Words.

Doct. *Under the Dispensation of the Messiah, God has greatly distinguished his Grace and Favour, inasmuch as he has spoken unto the World by his Son.*

Before I speak directly to this Point, it may not be amiss to observe, that it is pleaded by many of the *Fathers*, and by some *modern Writers*, that the *Word*, or *Son of God* appeared to *Moses*, and the *Patriarchs*, and *others*, under the *Old Testament*; whereas, you see, it is plainly intimated in the *Text*, that it is the peculiar Privilege of the *Christian Church*, to receive *prophetick Messages* from God by his *Son*. I think 'tis undeniably evident, that neither the *Law*, nor yet any *Prophecy*, relating to *Gospel Times*, was delivered by the *Son of God*, under any former Dispensation. But yet it may be said, that there is nothing in the *Text* that makes against the Opinion of the Son's being the *Angel* that

that conducted the *Children of Israel* out of *Egypt*, and thro' the Wilderness; and who drove out their Enemies from before their Face, and gave them the Possession of the Land of *Canaan*. He might appear to them, and direct them in the Way in which they were to go, and fight their Battles for them, tho' he did not make known to them any of God's Statutes, Ordinances, or Judgments; or reveal to them what should befall them in future Times.

I must own, I do not see that this Notion any way contradicts the Words of the *Text*. And there are some Things in *Scripture*, that seem to favour it; and particularly, that *one Angel* only is spoken of as employed in bringing the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, Numb. xx. 16. and in preserving, and protecting them in their Way thro' the Wilderness to the promised Land; and he is called by way of eminency, *God's Angel*; and he has great Power and Authority ascribed to him. *Behold*, says *God* to *Moses*, *I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the Way, and to bring thee into the Place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his Voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your Transgressions: for my Name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his Voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an Enemy un-*
to

to thine Enemies, and an Adversary unto thine Adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebuzites; and I will cut them off, Exod. xxiii. 20---23. See also Numb. xx. 16. This Angel is called, the Angel of God's Presence, by the Prophet Isaiah; in all their Affliction, says he, he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them: in his Love, and in his Pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the Days of Old, Is. lxiii. 9. Tho' these things, at first Sight, may incline one to the Opinion which I have just now mentioned, yet I think a little Attention will make the Matter at least very doubtful. For,

1. Tho' the Delivery of the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, is ascribed to *one Angel*, this can be no Proof that the *Angel* was the *Word* or *Son of God*, because the *Law* at *Mount Sinai*, is said to have been delivered to *Moses* by *one Angel*, Acts vii. 38. And yet the *Text* will not allow us to say, that this *Angel* was the *Son of God*.

2. The *Angel* that conducted the Children of *Israel*, gave out *Laws, Statutes, and Judgments*, according to which the *Israelites* were obliged to regulate their
Lives;

Lives; whereas 'tis plain from the *Text*, that the *Son of God* did not sustain the Character of a *Prophet* till he became *incarnate*. *If thou shalt indeed obey his Voice*, says *God* to *Moses*, *and do all that I speak, I will be an Enemy to thine Enemies*. These Words, I think, plainly intimate, that the *Angel* that conducted the Children of *Israel*, enacted Laws by which they were to be governed, and spake unto them in the Name of the Lord, which the Words of the *Text* will not suffer us to say of the *Son of God*.

3. As to the *Angel's* being stiled *the Angel of God's Presence*; this may be said of all the *Angels* that made up the glorious Retinue that attended upon the *Divine Majesty*, whenever he appeared to the *Israelites* in the Form of Fire; but *one* of these *Angels*, who is called *the Captain of the Host of the Lord*, might be stiled the *Angel of his Presence* by way of Eminency, and therefore I observe,

4. That it is probable, that this *Angel* was *Michael*; for he is expressly called in *Daniel*, *the Prince of Israel*, and *the first or chief Prince*. Dan. x. 13, 21. he was a *Prime Minister* in the *Heavenly Host*, and his particular Province was to preside over the Children of *Israel*, and to fight for them, against all their Enemies.

It may be said, that the *Apostle Paul* charges the *Israelites* with tempting *Christ* in the Wilderness. *Neither let us tempt Christ*, says he, *as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents.* 1 Cor. x. 9.

I own there is some Difficulty in this Place; but,

1. I observe, that it is not said, let us not tempt *Christ* as some of them also tempted *Christ*, but as some of them also tempted; and therefore, *God* may as well be understood, as *Christ*; and the Meaning may be this, let us not tempt *Christ*, by loathing his heavenly Doctrine, as the *Israelites* tempted *God*, by loathing *Manna* which he gave them from Heaven.
2. We ought to supply what is wanting in the *Apostle's* Words, from the History referr'd to: now it is expressly said there, that they tempted *God*. *The People spake against God, and against Moses, wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the Wilderness? for there is not Bread, neither is there any Water, and our Soul loatheth this light Bread. And the Lord sent fiery Serpents among the People, and they bit the People, and much People of Israel died.* Num. xxi. 5, 6.

I hope this will not be looked upon as an useless Digression; for if the *Son of God* neither made any Revelations to *Israel*,
nor

nor presided over them as their *Prince* and *Leader*, what Reason have *Christians* to be thankful to God, that he has not only sent his *Son* to be the *Revealer* of his Mind and Will to his People, but has also appointed him to be their *King* and *Ruler*. *Michael* the *Arch-Angel* was the *Prince* of *Israel*, but the *Son of God*, who is the Head of all Principalities and Powers, is Head over all Things to the Christian Church. *Unto the Angels*, saith the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, *hath he not put in subjection the World to come*, i. e. the Gospel Church and State, *but he hath put all things in subjection under the Feet of Christ*; yea *Angels* themselves, who, it is probable, had heretofore their distinct Kingdoms, over which they presided, are commanded to worship him.

I shall now consider the Doctrinal Point, which you may remember is this.

Under the Dispensation of the Messiah, God has greatly distinguished his Grace and Favour, inasmuch as he has spoken unto the World by his Son.

Now this will appear plain,

1. By considering briefly the *superior Dignity* of the *Son*.

2. By considering the *Revelation* which he has made unto the World.

1. I say, it will appear plain by considering briefly the *superior Dignity of the Son*.

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God in former Days spake unto the *Fathers* by the *Prophets*, but in *these last Days*, he has spoken unto us by his *Son*. Our Lord, when he was upon the Earth, put forth the following *Parable*. *There was*, says he, *a certain Householder which planted a Vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a Wine-Press in it; and built a Tower, and lett it out to Husband-men, and went into a far Country. And when the Time of the Fruit drew near, he sent his Servants to the Husband-men, that they might receive the Fruits of it, i. e. he sent his Prophets to the Jews, to remind them of their Duty, and to encourage them in their Obedience, but they took his Servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another; again, he sent other Servants, more than the first; i. e. more Prophets to endeavour to reclaim them, and exhort them to Repentance, but they did unto them likewise. Last of all, he sent unto them his Son, saying, they will reverence my Son. Mat. xxi. 33---37.* This was the last, and most powerful Means, that God made use of to reduce the *Jews* to Repentance; and he justly expected that they would have been prevailed upon by the great Dignity and Authority of his own Son. The greater any Person is that comes with a Commission from a *Sovereign Prince*, the greater Reverence and Respect is due

to him; and if he be his own Son, the greatest Attention is to be paid to the *Message* which he brings.

Now, God has spoken unto us by his Son, whom, says the *Apostle*, he has appointed *Heir of all Things*, i. e. he hath invested him with an universal Power and Dominion. *He hath given him the Heavens for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession. He hath put all things in subjection under his Feet*, saith the *Apostle*, for in that he put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. Heb. ii. viii. When God had raised him from the Dead, he set him at his own right Hand in the heavenly Places, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his Feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church. Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. The Father, now, judgeth no Man, having given all Judgment to the Son. Joh. v. 22. So that all Men should honour this great Lord and Judge of all things, even as they honour the Father.

How greatly has God distinguished his Mercy to the *Christian Church*, in sending us a *Prophet*, under whose Feet he has put all things in Subjection; who is not only

Prince of Palestine, which was formerly the Province of *Michael the Arch-Angel*, but of the whole World, *whether visible or invisible!*

Again, God is said to have *made all things by his Son*. God, who is the original Fountain and Cause of every thing that exists, created all things by the Ministry of his Son. To this Purpose the *Apostle* speaks *1 Cor. viii. 6.* *To us there is but one God, viz. the Father, of whom [as the primary and original Cause] are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, viz. Jesus Christ, by [or through whom] are all things, and we by him.* So *Eph. iii. 9.* *God who created all things by Jesus Christ.* And *Joh. i. 3.* *All things were made by [or through] him, and without him was not any thing made, that was made. Whether they be things in Heaven, or things on Earth; whether they be visible or invisible; whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: all things were created by him, and for him.* *Colos. i. 16.*

So that I say the *Son*, who was commissioned by the Father to preach the glad Tidings of Salvation unto the World, made all things in the *Beginning*, not the new and Evangelical Dispensation, as the *Soci-nians* say, but the whole visible and invisible World; for as to the Church or Evangelical

vangelical State, which is under the Government and Authority of *Christ*, it is treated of by the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, in the 3^d Chapter 1, 2 & 3^d. Verses, where he proves *Christ's* Pre-eminence to *Moses*. *Wherefore holy Brethren*, says he, *Partakers of the heavenly Calling*, consider the *Apostle* and *High Priest* of our Profession *Jesus Christ*, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also *Moses* was faithful in all his House. God gave *Moses* this honourable Testimony at *Mount Sinai*; my *Servant Moses*, says he, is faithful in all my House. Num. xii. 7. i. e. in ordering and directing the Children of *Israel*, who were God's Family. After this, the *Apostle* proceeds to shew *Christ's* superior Dignity and Excellency. *This Man*, says he, viz. *Christ*, was counted worthy of more Honour than *Moses*, inasmuch as he who hath builded the House [or who orders and governs the House] hath more Honour than the House. Now by House here, is plainly meant the *Christian Church*, as appears from ver. 6. *Christ*, says the *Apostle*, was faithful over his own House as a Son, whose House we are, if we hold fast the Confidence, and the Rejoicing of the Hope firm unto the end.

So that the great Prophet, by whom God spake unto the World in the last Days, laid, in the Beginning, the Foundation of

the Earth and of the Heavens. Angels had no creating Power; *Moses* was only a Servant in the House or Church of God, whereof he was a Part; but *Christ* created all things, and is invested with a Sovereign Dominion over the Works of his Hands, and particularly over the whole Church of God. How great a Privilege is it to receive *Messages* from God, by such a glorious and exalted Being!

The great *Christian Prophet* is also said, to be *the Brightness of God's Glory*. He is, as it were, a bright Ray of the *Divine Glory*. *Myriads* of *Angels* under the *Mosaick* Dispensation appeared in the Form of Light, which was a Symbol of the *Majestick Presence* of God. This Light was not an *Emanation* from God, but properly his *Habitation*; whereas the *Son* shines forth from the Substance of the Father, as a Ray of Light is said to proceed from the Body of the Sun. *Angels* are created Beings, created by the *Son*, whereas the *Son* is begotten of the Father in an ineffable Manner. This glorious Ray, which proceeds from the *Divine Majesty*, is the *Messenger* of the *Gospel Covenant*. An *Angel*, who was Part of God's *Retinue*, spake to *Moses*, and the Children of *Israel*; but the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who proceedeth forth, and came from God, hath spoken to the *Christian Church*. This is an Instance of God's distinguishing

stinguishing Grace and Mercy, which he has been pleased to make manifest in the *last Days*.

Christ is also called the *Image, Character* or *Representation* of the *Father's Person*, or rather *Substance*. In *Philip. ii. 6.* he is said to have *been in the Form of God*. In *Colos. i. 15.* he is said to be *the Image of the invisible God*. And in *1 Cor. i. 24.* he is said to be *the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*; i. e. by him is manifested the *Power*, and by him is set forth, in the most conspicuous Manner, the *Wisdom* of the *Father*.

The *Angels*, under the *Mosaick Dispensation*, were invested with great *Power*, and were in many *Respects* exceeding glorious, when they attended upon the *Divine Presence*, and executed his *Will*; yet the *Representation* which they gave of the *Majesty*, and *Glory* of *God*, was but a *faint* and *imperfect Transcript*, in Comparison of the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God*, which we behold in the *Face of Jesus Christ*.

When *Moses* had seen the *Glory* of the *God of Israel*, his *Face* shone exceeding bright; but the *Light* that sat upon him, did not so properly represent the *Divine Majesty*, as the bright and refulgent *Glory* that appears in the *Face of Jesus Christ*. The *Israelites* could not stedfastly behold the

Glory of the Face of Moses; it was a dazzling Light, and was not design'd to be a *standing Character of the Divine Majesty*, being to be done away, as the *Apostle* speaks 2 Cor. iii. 7. whereas the *Glory of God*, which shines in *the Face of Jesus Christ*, is a *constant and invariable Representation* of the infinite Perfections of the Deity, which may be stedfastly look'd upon. *We all*, says the *Apostle*, *with open Face, behold as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord; and are thereby* [it being a perfect and powerful *Manifestation of God*] *changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory.* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Lastly, the *Son of God* is said to uphold all things by the *Word of the Father's Power*; I say the *Father's Power*; as appears plain from the *Context*. *Who being the Brightness of his, viz. the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his, viz. the Father's Person; and upholding all things by the Word of his, viz. the Father's Power.* However, it appears that the *Son* has the *Direction and Management* of the visible and invisible World, tho' all is conducted by *Power derived from the Father*. It is said expressly, *Coloss. i. 17.* that *all things consist by the Son*. God who made all things by his *Son*, continues to preserve and govern them by *Him*. The *Apostle Peter* tells us, that *by the Word of God*
[or

[or the *second Person* in the *Trinity*, as is not unlikely] the *Heavens* were of old, and the *Earth* standing out of the *Water*, and in the *Water*. Whereby the *World* that then was, being overflowed with *Water*, perished. And that the *Heavens* and the *Earth* which are now, are by the same *Word* kept in *Store*, and reserv'd unto *Fire* against the *Day of Judgment*, and *Perdiction* of ungodly *Men*. 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6, 7.

Upon the whole, you see that we have an exalted Character of the *Son of God*. He is the *Heir* or *Governor* of all things; and by him *God* made the *Worlds*. He is the *Brightness* of the *Father's Glory*, and the express *Image* of his *Substance*; and he upholds all things by the *Word* of *God's Power*. How glorious is the *Messenger* of the *Christian Covenant*! How much greater than *Moses*, or even than *Angels*! he is made so much better than the *Angels*, saith the *Apostle*, as he hath by *Inheritance* obtained a more excellent *Name* than they. He is said to have a *Name* given him, which is above every *Name*. Phil. ii. 9. And to be set at *God's right Hand*, far above all *Principality*, and *Power*, and *Might*, and *Dominion*, and every *Name* that is named, not only in this *World*, but also in that which is to come. Eph. i. 20, 21.

Tho' an *Angel*, who spake with *Moses* in the *Mount*, delivered the *Law*; and
tho'

tho' *Moses* delivered several *Messages* to the Children of *Israel* from the God of Heaven, with whom he is said to have spoken *Mouth to Mouth*, yet the greatest *Messenger* that was ever dispatched from Heaven, with a Commission to treat with sinful Man, is *God's own Son*: And it cannot be doubted, but as he is the most *honourable Ambassador* that ever came from the *Father* to this World, the Dispatches that he hath brought, are of the greatest Consequence, and highly worthy of all Acceptation.

This leads me to consider,

2. The *Revelation* which he has made unto the World.

1. It is a *complete* and *full* Revelation. Light was communicated to the *Jews* by several Steps and Degrees. They had first, a carnal Law, that was only a Shadow of good things to come; and after *Moses*, the *Prophets* revealed to them more divine and heavenly Things. They had a Gradation of Prophecies relating to the *Messiah* and his Kingdom, which were fulfilled in *Christ*, and clearly manifested in him. *They saw God's Glory, and his Greatness, and heard his Voice out of the Midst of the Fire*, Deut. v. 24. But yet this was but a partial Manifestation of God, compared with that which is communicated to us by his *own Son*. *No Man, saith our Lord, hath seen God at any Time; the only begotten*

begotten Son, who is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Joh. i. 18. He hath fully revealed his Counsels, and hath made known his Attributes. All things, saith he to his Apostles, that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

John xv. 15. Our Lord, indeed, did not, during his personal Abode upon Earth, fully make known the Doctrines of Christianity; but after his Ascension at the right Hand of God, he perfected what was wanting in his Revelation, by the Ministry of his Spirit. He tells his Disciples in the following Chapter, that *he has yet many things to say unto them, which, at present, they are not able to bear; howbeit, says he, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide them into all Truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew them things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15.* Indeed, whilst he was upon Earth, he fully communicated to his Apostles, the great and essential Doctrines of Christianity; he preached to them the Doctrine of his Passion, of his Resurrection and Ascension; of a future Judgment, and eternal Life; but he did not acquaint them
with

with the abolishing of the *Jewish Law*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*, till after his Ascension into Heaven. Then, indeed, he fully communicated these Mysteries unto his holy *Apostles* and *Prophets* by his Spirit. As to the Calling of the *Gentiles*, the *Apostle* is very express in the following Words. *In other Ages*, says he, *it was not made known to the Sons of Men, as it is now revealed to his holy Apostles, that the Gentiles should be Fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and Partakers of the Promise in Christ, by the Gospel.* Eph. iii. 5, 6.

As to the Abolishment of the *Law* of *Moses*, to make way for a more reasonable Service, and a more spiritual Dispensation, the *Apostle Paul*, in particular, had a full and compleat Revelation concerning it. This appears in Part, from his pleading so much for Justification by Faith, without the Deeds of the *Law*; but that which gives us the clearest Evidence of it, is his representing the *Law* as containing only carnal Ordinances, that were as so many Types and Shadows of the substantial and spiritual Blessings exhibited in the Gospel. *Meat, Drink, Holy-Days, New-Moons and Sabbaths*, saith he, *are only Shadows of things to come, but the Body is of Christ.* Coloss. ii. 16, 17. But he is more full and express as to this Matter, in his *Epistle*

tle to the Hebrews, in which he tells us, that the Tabernacle, and all the Service that belonged to it, was only a Figure, for the Time then present, of much better things to be reveal'd at the Coming of Christ. *The first Tabernacle*, says he, *was a Figure for the Time then present, in which were offered both Gifts and Sacrifices, that could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience, which stood only in Meats, and Drinks, and divers Washings, and carnal Ordinances imposed on them until the Time of Reformation. But Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with Hands, i. e. not of this Building; neither by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us. Heb. ix. 8—12. And ch. x. ver. 1. he says, the Law having [only] a Shadow of good things to come, and not the very Image of the things, can never with these Sacrifices, which they offered Year by Year continually, make the Comers thereunto perfect.*

Upon the whole, I think it is evident, that the Son of God, in the Course of a few Years, fully revealed the Mind and Will of God. He made a great Progress in the Discharge of his Prophetic Office,

whilst he was upon the Earth; and what he kept hid, during his personal Ministration here, he fully revealed after his Ascension into Heaven, by a plentiful Effusion of his *Spirit* upon his holy *Apostles* and *Prophets*. To one was given by the *Spirit* the *Word of Wisdom*, to another the *Word of Knowledge* by the same *Spirit*, to another *Faith* by the same *Spirit*, and to another *Prophecy*. 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. The *Apostles* had a full View of the whole Scheme of *Christianity*, and of all the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel*; and they have fully declared the whole Counsel of God in their inspired Writings, which are committed as a sacred Depositum to all the Churches of *Christ*, and are able to make us wise unto Salvation, thro' Faith that is in *Christ Jesus*.

2. The Revelation which the Son of God has made unto the World is clear, as well as full. The *Prophets* of old spake in divers Manners, but the Son of God has spoken unto us by the *Holy Spirit*, where-with he was anointed above his Fellows; and the *Apostles*, being filled with the *Holy Ghost*, made manifest the Doctrines of *Christianity* to every one's Conscience. The *Law* was veil'd under Types and Shadows, but the *Gospel* was deliver'd with great Perspicuity and Plainness of Speech. This is a particular Excellency of the *Gospel*.

pel above the Law, as appears from the following Words of the *Apostle Paul*. *We* [viz. the *Ministers* of the *Gospel*] says he, use great Plainness of Speech, and not as *Moses* [the *Minister* of the *Law*] who put a Veil over his Face, that the Children of *Israel* could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. 2 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

Indeed, there are a great many things in the Writings of the *Prophets*, that are much plainer than those that are contained in the *Law*. They are said to have prophesied of the *Grace* that should come unto us at the *Revelation* of *Jesus Christ*. And they are said to have ministred the things which are now reported unto us by them which have preached the *Gospel*, with the *Holy Ghost* sent down from *Heaven*. 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. Yet for all this, *Grace* is said to be brought to *Christians*, [i. e. in an eminent Manner] by the *Revelation* of *Jesus Christ*. 1 Pet. i. 13. The great Doctrines of *Christianity* are more clearly made manifest by the *Preaching* and *Miracles* of *Christ* and of his *Apostles*, than was ever done before.

For Instance,

1. The Doctrine of Repentance for the Remission of Sins is declared in a more convincing Manner in the *Gospel*, than was ever done, either in the *Law*, or the *Prophets*.

Prophets. *John the Baptist*, who was our Saviour's Forerunner, came unto all the Country about *Jordan*, preaching the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins. Luke iii. 3. And it is said that *Jerusalem*, and all *Judea*, and all the Region round about *Jordan*, went out unto him, and were baptized of him in *Jordan*, confessing their Sins. Mat. iii. 5, 6. This great Concourse of People which came unto *John* to be baptized, must needs have had clear Evidence of his *Prophetic Mission*, and of the Truth of his Doctrine, otherwise they would not have flocked to him in such great Numbers to have been baptized of him; Baptism for the Remission of Sins, being never before administered to any of the Seed of *Israel*.

The Preaching of the *Gospel* seems to have been, in a peculiar Manner, the clear Revelation of the Doctrine of Repentance for the Remission of Sins. Our Lord, after his Resurrection, tells his *Apostles*, that *Repentance and Remission of Sins must be preached in his Name, among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem*. Luke xxiv. 47. Accordingly, the *Apostles Paul and Barnabas*, when they were at *Antioch in Pisidia*, concluded their Discourse on the Death and Resurrection of *Christ*, with the following Address to the People; *be it known unto you Men and Brethren, that thro' this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveness*

Forgiveness of Sins ; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Acts xiii. 38, 39.

The Gospel clears up this important Doctrine of Repentance for the Remission of Sins, which seems to have been but darkly apprehended by the Jews, and gives plain and convincing Evidence of a full and perfect Remission thro' the Blood of Jesus. Under the Law there was a Remembrance again made of Sins, once every Year, because it was not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins ; but Christ by one Offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 3, 4, 14.

2. The Doctrine of an Atonement to be made for the Sins of the World, thro' the Death and Intercession of the Messiah, is much more clearly and satisfactorily revealed in the Gospel, than either in the Law, or the Prophets. Indeed, the Sufferings of the Messiah were spoken of in the Old Testament ; when our Lord appeared to his Disciples, after his Resurrection, he said unto them, *these are the Words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their Understandings,*
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that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, thus it written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the Dead the third Day. Luke xxiv. 44, 45, 46. The Apostle Peter, preaching to the Jews, says, these things which God before had shew'd by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Acts iii. 18. The Apostle Paul tells King Agrippa, that he hath preached none other things, than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer. Acts xxvi. 22, 23. I delivered unto you, saith the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our Sins, according to the Scriptures. 1 Cor. xv. 3. But for all this, the Sufferings of Christ were but darkly prefigured in the Law of Moses. The Prophets, indeed, give evident Intimations that he was to die a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World; particularly *Isaiah* ch. liii. *Dan.* ix. 25, 26. and *Zechariah* xii. 10. But notwithstanding all that either prefigures the Death of Christ for the Sins of the World. or expressly relates unto it in the *Old Testament*, the Jews had learned no such Doctrine from it; for they expected that their *Messiah* should have been a great Prince, and that he should have sat upon *David's* Throne in the literal Sense, and have reign-

ed gloriously over *Israel*. Nay the very *Apostles* themselves were so far from having any Notion of a *suffering Messiah*, during our *Saviour's* Life Time, even tho' he expressly told them himself that he was to be put to Death, that one of them is said to have rebuked him when he spake of the Death that he was to die at *Jerusalem*, saying, *far be it from thee Lord, this shall not come unto thee*: And of all the Twelve it is said, that *they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things that were spoken*. Luke xviii. 34.

Indeed their Unbelief as to this Point, was more owing to Prejudice, than to want of Evidence of it in the *Old Testament*. *Christ* said unto the two Men that were going down to *Emmaus*, and who were greatly offended by his Death, *O Fools and slow of Heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory?* Luke xxiv. 25, 26.

Our Lord, after his Resurrection, removed this Prejudice out of the Minds of his Disciples, by clear and full Explications of what they did not before rightly apprehend, *beginning at Moses and all the Prophets he expounded*, to the two Men that were going down to *Emmaus*, *in all the Scriptures, the things concerning him-*
U 2 *self;*

self; and it is said, that he *opened the Understandings of his twelve Disciples that they might understand the Scriptures*, particularly those Parts of them which treat of his Death and Resurrection.

The typical Representations of the Death of the *Messiah* in the *Law of Moses*, and the Predictions concerning it in the *Prophets*, are fulfilled and accomplished by the actual Sufferings of *Christ*, who has evidently prov'd that he is the *Messiah* who was foretold; and as for the Ends of his Sufferings, they are clearly and fully revealed in the *New Testament*; more clearly and satisfactorily, than in any Part of the *Old Testament*.

Indeed the *Prophet Isaiah* ch. liii. is justly thought by the Generality of *Christian* Writers, to speak expressly of one of the most important Ends of *Christ's* Sufferings. Surely, saith he, *he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows, — he was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.* ver. 4, 5, 6. Tho', I think, these Words plainly speak of *Christ* as a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, yet it is certain that a Part of them

them at least, may be understood in a different Sense: I say this is certain, as appears from *Matthew's* Application of them to our Saviour's curing all Manner of Sick-ness, and healing all Manner of Diseases. *When the even was come*, says he, *they brought unto him many that were possessed with Devils; and he cast out the Spirits with his Word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by Esaias the Prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.* Mat. viii. 16, 17. But notwithstanding the *Evangelist* hath told us, that a Part of the *Prophecy* under Consideration was fulfilled by the great Labour and Pains which our *Saviour* underwent in his Life-time, in relieving a great Number of sick Folks that were brought unto him to be healed; I think the more natural and obvious meaning of other parts of the *Prophecy* is to be understood concerning his Death, which he suffered as a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of the World.

But let this be as it will, it is the repeated Language of the *inspired Writers* of the *New Testament*, after our Saviour's Accession, that he died for our Sins. *He was delivered*, saith the *Apostle Paul*, *for our Offences.* Rom. iv. 25. *I delivered unto you first of all*, says he, *that which I also received, how that Christ died for our*

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Sins,

Sins, according to the Scriptures. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Who his own self, lays the Apostle Peter, bare our Sins in his own Body, on the Tree; by whose Stripes ye are healed. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Christ is expressly said to be the Propitiation for our Sins. 1 John ii. 2. and iv. 10. and to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People. Heb. ii. 17. and as the High-Priest of old entered into the Sanctuary with Blood, to make Atonement for the Children of Israel; in like manner the Christian High-Priest entered by his own Blood into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us. Heb. ix. 12.

It was another end of Christ's Death to confirm the *New Testament, or Covenant of Grace*, and by this Means, to encourage us to break off our Sins by Repentance, and to serve the Lord without Fear. *For this Cause*, saith the *Apostle to the Hebrews* *he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by Means of Death, for the Redemption of the Transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the Promise of eternal Inheritance. For where a Testament is, there must also of Necessity be the Testator. For a Testament is of force after Men are dead; otherwise it is of no Strength at all whilst the Testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first Testament was dedicated without Blood.*
For

For when Moses had spoken every Precept to all the People, according to the Law, he took the Blood of Calves and of Goats, with Water and scarlet Wool, and Hyssop, and sprinkled both the Book and all the People, saying, this is the Blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Heb. ix. 13—20. The Blood of Christ is the Blood of the New Testament, i. e. it is thereby fully established and confirmed; by which Means we have a strong Consolation, and are sufficiently encouraged to fly for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope that is set before us; which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entreth into that within the Veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High-Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedech. Heb. vi. 18, 19, 20. Every Man, that has this Hope in him, purifyeth himself, even as God is pure. 1 John iii. 3. The Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, and is abundantly confirmed by the Blood of Christ, teacheth us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself

a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.
Tit. ii. 11—14.

Thus, the great and important Ends of *Christ's* Death are more *fully* and *satisfactorily* revealed in the *Gospel*, than either in the *Law* or the *Prophets*.

3. Everlasting Life, as the Reward of Righteousness, is more *fully* revealed, more *particularly* described, and more *abundantly* confirmed in the *New Testament*, than in the *Old*.

1. It is more *fully* revealed. All the Sanctions of the *Mosaick* Covenant are plainly of a temporal Nature. It is obvious to every one that reads the five Books of *Moses* with Care and Attention, that there are no *express* Promises of everlasting Life contained in them. * The *Israelites* were encouraged in their Obedience with the Promise of long Life, and of Plenty and Prosperity in the Land of *Canaan*. Other Blessings might be intended for them in the *Divine Mind*, but they were wrapt up under Types and Shadows, and under dark and general Expressions.

Indeed, in the Writings of the *Prophets*, there are more clear and distinct Promises of eternal Life. The following Words in *Daniel*, which were spoken by an *Angel*, are very remarkable. *And many of them*

* See Sermon I.

that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt. Dan. xii. 2. But besides the Difficulty that arises from the Context, it may be objected, that these Words contain a Promise of delivering the *Israelites* from their Oppressions, and of restoring them to their former State of Prosperity : And in order to support this Sense of the Words Passages, that may be said to be parallel, may be instanced in the *Prophets*, and particularly a very observable one, in the *Prophecy* of *Ezekiel*, which I shall quote at large. *The Hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the Midst of the Valley which was full of Bones.— And he said unto me, Son of Man, can these Bones live? and I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these Bones, and say unto them, O ye dry Bones, hear ye the Word of the Lord! Thus saith the Lord God unto these Bones, behold, I will cause Breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay Sinews upon you, and I will bring up Flesh upon you, and cover you with Skin, and put Breath in you; and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied there*
was

was a Noise, and behold a Shaking, and the Bones came together, Bone to his Bone. And when I beheld, lo, the Sinews and the Flesh came upon them, and the Skin covered them above; but there was no Breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the Wind; prophecy, Son of Man, and say to the Wind, thus saith the Lord God; come from the four Winds, O Breath! and breathe upon these Slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the Breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their Feet, an exceeding great Army. Then he said unto me, Son of Man, these Bones are the whole House of Israel. Behold, they say, our Bones are dried, and our Hope is lost, we are cut off for our Parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, behold, O my People, I will open your Graves, and cause you to come up out of your Graves, and bring you into the Land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your Graves, O my People, and brought you up out of your Graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own Land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord. Ezek. xxxvii. 1,—14.

This

This is a plain *Prophecy* of the deliverance which God designed to grant unto the Children of *Israel*; in which their Oppression by their Enemies is compared to Death and the Grave; and their Redemption from their Troubles to a Resurrection from the dead; and will be thought by some to weaken the Proof of a Promise of a Resurrection unto eternal Life, founded upon the abovementioned Prophecy of *Daniel*.

But if the Doctrine of eternal Life is not clearly and *peremptorily* declared, either by *Moses*, or the *Prophets*, 'tis express'd in the most *evident* Manner, by our Lord *Jesus*, who is the chief of *Prophets*. *Verily, verily I say unto you*, says our Lord, *he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation; but is raised from Death unto Life. Verily, verily I say unto you, the Hour is coming, and now is, when the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given unto the Son to have Life in himself; and hath given him Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this; for the Hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good,*
unto

unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation. John v. 24,—29.

This is so clear a Proof of a Resurrection, and a future state of eternal Rewards and Punishments, that I need not mention any other.

2. Everlasting Life is more *particularly* describ'd in the *New-Testament*, than in the *Old*. There is so little said of the Nature of it in the *Old Testament*, that the *Jews*, tho' they generally believe a Resurrection unto Life, have only gross and obscure Notions about it; many believing that it will not be eternal, and the Bulk of them believing that it will be of an earthly and sensual Nature. But our *Lord* has dispel'd the Clouds that obscured this important Doctrine; having not only fully assured us that Obedience to his *Gospel* shall be rewarded with everlasting Life, but having also declared to us, by his *Apostles*, the Nature of it; telling us, that *we shall see God as he is; that we shall be ever with him; and that we shall be like him.* 1 John iii. 2. 1 Thess. iv. 17. We are assured that *our vile Bodies will be changed, and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body.* Philip. iii. 21. That *this corruptible must put on Incorruption, and that this mortal must put on Immortality.* 1 Cor. xv. 53.

3. The

3. The Doctrine of everlasting Life is more abundantly confirmed in the *New Testament*, than in the *Old*. The Promise of God, indeed, is a firm Foundation to rest upon; but in difficult Cases, the Faith of God's People has often required, and God has often condescended to grant some farther Evidence, some more convincing Proof. And this he has done, in a very remarkable Manner, for the greater Confirmation of the Doctrine of a Resurrection unto eternal Life. *He hath appointed a Day, saith the Apostle, in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given Assurance to all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead.* Acts xvii.

31.

Thus has our Lord Jesus brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel,

Upon the whole we see, that the Revelation, which God has made unto the World in the *last Days* by his Son, is more full and clear than all the preceding successive Revelations that were made to former Ages. Thus *the People that walked in Darkness have seen a great Light, and upon them that dwelt in the Land of the Shadow of Death, hath the Light shined.* Is. ix. 2. and Luke i. 79. Christ is called by Zecharias,

charias, the Day-spring from on high. Luke i. 78. And by the Baptist, a Light shining in Darkness. John i. 5.

APPLICATION.

1. Seeing God has vouchsafed, after various Messages and Dispatches communicated to the World by *inferior Ministers*, to send his own *Son*, charg'd with the most important Commission to us; let us with the greatest Care, Attention, and Reverence, examine the Contents of his Commission. He has published a *new Covenant* of Grace, and has confirmed it with his Blood: let us often read it, and meditate upon it. The *Jews* were obliged to read diligently the *Laws of Moses*, to treasure them up in their Hearts, and to teach them their Children. *These Words*, saith *Moses*, *which I command thee this Day*, shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a Sign upon thine Hand, and they shall be as Frontlets between thine Eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the Posts of thine House, and on thy Gates. Deut. vi. 6---9. If the *Jews* were obliged to make the *Laws* of

of *Moses* so familiar to them, surely *Christians* are much more obliged to consult, with Seriousness and Diligence, the *Revelation* of *Jesus Christ* in the *Gospel*. A Revelation which contains all the *essential* Parts of the *Mosaick* Covenant; and which, instead of the Types and Shadows, and the burthen some Rites and Ceremonies of the *Legal* Dispensation, has introduced the most reasonable and spiritual Method of worshipping God; and has recommended Obedience to all the Precepts and Injunctions of the *Gospel*, by proposing an exceeding and immortal weight of Glory, as the Reward thereof. It is the Glory and Excellency of the *Christian* Dispensation above that of *Moses*, that whereas, *the Law came by Moses*; *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*. Treasures of Grace are brought to Light by the *Gospel*. The *Gospel* is the glad Tidings of Salvation. At the Birth of *Christ* the *Angels* of God lift up their Voices, and sung, *Glory to God in the Highest, on Earth Peace, and Good-will towards Men*. It was the Design of *Christ's* coming into the World, to save Sinners by preaching the Doctrine of Repentance for the Remission of Sins, and by offering up his Life a Ransom for us: and surely these Things deserve our most serious Meditation, and most grateful Acknowledgments. *This is a faithful Saying*, says the *Apostle Paul*, and worthy

thy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners. 1 Tim.

i. 15.

2. Seeing God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son; let us not only carefully consider the Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel, but let us endeavour to adorn the Christian Name and Profession, with suitable Lives and Conversations. Let us be sincerely obedient to all the Laws of our Redeemer; and let us improve the Grace and Mercy which he has so clearly revealed, to the Purposes for which they were designed. Dreadful will be the Doom of those that shall despise the Grace of the Gospel, and rebel against the Son of God. We ought to give the most earnest heed, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, to the Things which we have heard, lest at any Time we should let them slip. For if the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will? Heb.

ii.

ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. *He that despised Moses's Law, saith the same Apostle, died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses; of how much more sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy Thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace? for we know him who hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his People. It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God. Heb. x. 28,—37. Tho' these Words are especially applicable to Apostates from the Faith; yet certainly, if the Soul, that did ought presumptuously against the Law of Moses, was said to have reproached the Lord; and if, because he despised the Word of the Lord, and brake his Commandments, he was to be cut off, and his Iniquity was to be upon him, according to Num. xv. 30, 31. They that wilfully transgress the Laws of Christianity, shall perish without Remedy, and without Mercy.*

S E R M O N IX.

The Consecration, and Priest- hood of Christ.

H E B. v. 9.

*And being made perfect, he became
the Author of eternal Salvation to
all that obey him.*

OUR Lord Jesus has a great and powerful Influence over the Affairs of our Salvation. *He was obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name. Phil. ii. 8. 9. We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour. Heb. ii. 9. He has all Power given unto him both in Heaven and on Earth. He is our King, and the High-Priest of our Profession. Our King*

3

to

to rule and govern us, and to subdue all our Enemies; and our *High-Priest* to make Intercession for us, and to procure, by virtue of his Blood, every needful and desirable Blessing; particularly Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

We have a great High-Priest passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Whatever Excellency is requisite in an *High-Priest*, 'tis found in him, in an eminent Degree. Is Compassion for infirm and sinful Creatures a necessary Qualification in an *High-Priest*? Our great *High-Priest* is abundantly compassionate; for he is not an *High-Priest* that cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin. Is every *High-Priest* to be ordained of God? And doth no Man take this Honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron? Heb. v. 4. Our Lord Jesus did not usurp the Office of *High-Priest*. He glorified not himself to be made an *High-Priest*, but was appointed of God, who said unto him, thou art my Son, to Day have I begotten thee. And in another Place, thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedec. Ver. 5, 6. Were the *High-Priests* of old consecrated to their Office by Sacrifices offer'd up to God on their Behalf? This brings me to the Text. Our Lord Jesus himself was made a Sacrifice. He was

offered up unto God upon the Cross, and was thereby consecrated to be the Christian *High-Priest*; for this I take to be the Meaning of *being made perfect*. * By his Sufferings he was *made perfect*, or *consecrated* to the Priesthood. See *Heb. ii. 10.* And by his Resurrection from the Dead, he was publicly declared to be an *High-Priest* for ever. Thus the Word which is here translated, *being made perfect*, is render'd. *Heb. vii. 28. The Law maketh Men High-Priests, which have Infirmities; but the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

In discoursing on the Text, I shall consider,

I. The great Difference that there is between the *Consecration* of the *Priests* of Old, and that of the *Christian High-Priest*.

II. Shall assign the Reasons of the Difference.

* That *τελειωθείς*, which we translate *being made perfect*, ought to be taken here in the Notion of Consecration, may appear, says Dr. *Hammond*, from the Words that follow, as an Application of it, *ver. 10. being pronounced, or declared High-Priest*, which belongs to Christ after his Resurrection, and not before; that being the Time wherein all Power was given unto him, *viz.* the Power of Blessing wherein the *Melchisedec-Priesthood* consists. See Dr. *Whitby's* Annot. on *Heb. ii. 10.*

III. Shall

III Shall shew that they, who obey our Lord Jesus Christ, shall obtain eternal Salvation through his Influence and Intercession; and that 'tis in vain for any to hope for Salvation that do not obey him. I am,

I. To take Notice of the very great Difference that there is between the *Consecration* of the *Priests* of old, and that of the *Christian High-Priest*.

I might, under this Head, observe a very great Difference with Respect to their *Designation*, or *Appointment* to the *Priesthood*. *Aaron* and his Sons were, indeed, appointed by Name to the Priest's Office by God himself, as we find *Exod. xxviii. 1.* where *Moses* has the following Charge given him. *Take thou unto thee Aaron thy Brother, and his Sons with him, from among the Children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the Priest's Office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's Sons.* But notwithstanding this divine Designation of them to their Office, our *Lord Jesus* was set a-part by God himself, for the Office of *High-Priest*, in a more solemn Manner, being appointed by the Oath of God. He excelled all the Priests under the Law, in as much as *not without an Oath he was made Priest.* For those Priests were made without an Oath, but this with an Oath by him that said unto him, the

Lord swear and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedec. Heb. vii. 20, 21. The Law, appointing the *High-Priesthood* to be in *Aaron's Family*, made the *High-Priests* of old; but the *Word of the Oath* maketh the Son. Ver. 28.

But I am principally to consider the Difference in their *Consecration*. Now, the Difference is as follows.

1. When *Aaron* was consecrated, he was arrayed with costly *Garments* with *Garments famous for Glory and Beauty*; and he had a *Mitre*, and an *holy Crown* put upon his *Head*. Exod. xxix. 5, 6. *Thou shalt take the Garments, and put upon Aaron the Coat, and the Robe of the Ephod, and the Ephod and the Breast-Plate, and gird him with the curious Girdle of the Ephod. And thou shalt put the Mitre upon his Head, and put the holy Crown upon the Mitre.*

At our Lord's Consecration, he had no such Honours done him; he was insulted by the Rabble, and mocked by the Soldiers that crucified him. By way of Contempt, and in order to expose him to the Ridicule of the People, the Soldiers put on him a scarlet Robe; and instead of a Crown or Mitre, they platted a Crown of Thorns, and put it upon his Head; and instead of a Royal Scepter, they put a Reed in his Right-Hand. And when they had dressed up the Lord of Life in this antick Manner,

They

They bowed the Knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail King of the Jews!

2. At Aaron's Consecration, Moses took the anointing Oil, and poured it upon his Head, and anointed him. Exod. xxix. 7.

Our Lord was treated in a quite different Manner; instead of anointing him, the rude Soldiers spit upon him.

3. There were several Sacrifices when Aaron and his Sons were consecrated to the Priest's Office. *A Bullock was killed before the Lord, and the Blood thereof was put upon the Horns of the Altar. Two Rams were also slain, and their Blood was sprinkled round about upon the Altar. But Aaron and his Sons escaped with their Lives; they were not consecrated to the Office by their own Death, but remained untouch'd, whilst the Bullocks and the Rams were slain in their stead.*

If we consider the Consecration of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Office of High-Priest, we shall find the Case to be quite different. He had no need of any Atonement to be made for him. He was *holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from Sinners; and needed not, as the High-Priests of old, to offer Sacrifice first for himself.* Heb. vii. 26, 27. But for all this he offered up a Sacrifice unto God; and that Sacrifice was himself. God had prepared a Body for him for this Purpose, and he was obedient

unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Neither Bullock nor Lamb must be slain in his stead ; he himself must die a much more painful Death than they. Their Lives were dispatched in a little Time, and no Art was employed to make their Deaths more painful to them than necessary ; but the Son of God was appointed to die one of the most painful and lingering Deaths, and was made a *Spectacle to the World, and to Angels, and to Men.*

So very different was the Manner of *our Lord's* Consecration from that of *Aaron's*. *Our Lord* was consecrated to his Work by Sufferings. He had the greatest Indignities offered him by the Great, and He was the Rabble's Mirth ; and his Life was made a Sacrifice to the Rage and Fury of a bigotted Faction ; whereas *Aaron* was consecrated to his Office with great Glory, and without any Suffering. I proceed,

II. To assign the Reasons of this great Difference between the *Consecration* of the *Legal*, and *Christian High-Priest*.

As to the Priests under the Law.

1. Sacrifices of Beasts were to be offered up at their *Consecration*, in order to make Atonement for them. The Bullock that was slain at the *Consecration* of *Aaron* and his Sons, was a *Sin-offering*. Exod. xxix.

14. Before God would accept of any Gift

or

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or Present at their Hands, an Atonement was to be made for them by a *Sin-Offering*. When this was done, God accepted *an whole Burnt-Offering, and a Peace-Offering*, as we find *Levit. viii. 18,—22.*

2. The *Levitical Priests*, were not to be slain themselves. It was impossible for them to be consecrated to their Office by their own Deaths, in Regard they were to officiate in an earthly Tabernacle that was prepared for them. There were Altars erected, where they were to offer their daily Sacrifices; and a Sanctuary was built, into which the *High-Priests* were obliged to go once a Year to make Atonement for the Sins of the People. They were appointed to be *High-Priests* on Earth, and to offer Gifts according to the Law, which it had not been possible for them to have done, if they had been slain themselves.

As to the *Christian High-Priest*, the Case was quite different. I have already observed, that there was no need to consecrate him to his Office by a Sin-Offering, in order to render his future Offerings acceptable to God. He had no need of cleansing, no need of an Atonement to be made for him, having no Sins of his own, and being as a *Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot.*

But it was however necessary that he should be consecrated to his Office of *High-Priest* by his own Blood, by his own Death; for,

1. He

1. He must needs have something to offer. Every High Priest is ordained to offer Gifts and Sacrifices; wherefore it is of Necessity that this Man have somewhat to offer. Heb. viii. 3. Now it was found by Experience, that the Offerings under the Law were of little or no Account; they would not purge the Conscience from Sin; they only atoned for Civil Guilt; only acquitted the Criminal from temporal Punishment. Besides, God had positively declared his Dislike of them. These Things are expressly asserted, Heb. x. 1, 4, 5, 6. *The Law can never with those Sacrifices, which they offered Year by Year continually, make the Comers thereunto perfect. For it is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sin. Wherefore when he [the Messiah] cometh into the World, he saith, Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldst not; but a Body hast thou prepared me. In Burnt Offerings and Sacrifice for Sin thou hast had no Pleasure.*

As God had no Pleasure in legal Sacrifices, and as the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the Flesh, and were not of sufficient Virtue and Efficacy to purge the Conscience, it was necessary that our great High Priest should have some better Offering to make for the Sins of the World.

Now,

Now, no Offering was thought so proper, by infinite Wisdom, to answer all the great and important Ends of a Sacrifice for Sin, as the Blood of the great *High-Priest* himself; therefore *a Body was prepared him* to be made a Sacrifice of, and he came into the World for this End, viz. *To offer up his Life a Ransom for us.* Then said I, lo I come [in the Volume of the Book it is written thus of me] to do thy Will, O God. Heb. x. 7.

The Lord Jesus is the *Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World; the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World.* And though the Blood of Bulls and of Goats availed only to purify the Flesh, the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God, is of sufficient Virtue to purge our Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God. Heb. ix. 14. *The Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin.*

But I proceed to observe,

2. That our Lord Jesus was not to officiate as *High-Priest* upon Earth; he was to appear with his Blood in a more glorious Tabernacle and Sanctuary than were under the Law. The Sanctuary where he was to present his Offering is in Heaven. And therefore in order to his appearing before God, as our *High-Priest*, he must first be slain; he must lay down his Life that he
may

may take it again, and present himself before God, in the true Holy of Holies, the heavenly Tabernacle and Sanctuary.

All this is made plain by exprefs Passages of Scripture. Christ is said to be a *Minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not Man.* Heb. viii. 2. and Heb. xi. 12. *Christ being come an High-Priest of good Things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with Hands, i. e. not of this Building, neither by the Blood of Goats and Calves; but by his own Blood, he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us; and Heb. ix. 24. Christ is not entered into the holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven it self, now to appear in the Presence of God for us.*

The *worldly Sanctuary*, as it is called, Heb. ix. 1. was only a Type of the true Holy of Holies: And as the *Legal High-Priests* were to appear before the Ark in the Sanctuary, and there to offer up to God the Blood of Atonement for the Sins of the People; so the *Christian High-Priest*, after he was slain upon the Cross as our Sacrifice, was to enter with his Blood into the Holy Place, and there to officiate for ever in the Quality of *High-Priest*. Accordingly, after he had appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, and had

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obtained eternal Redemption for us, he entered once into the Holiest of all, where He ever liveth to make Intercession for us.

It will be said, if our *Lord Jesus* was consecrated to the Priesthood by being offered up a Sacrifice on the Cross, it will follow, that the Execution of his Office as *High-Priest* is chiefly in Heaven.

'Tis true, this is the natural Consequence; which I shall endeavour more fully to prove and explain.

Now that our Lord did not properly exercise his *sacerdotal Function* whilst he was upon the Earth, is, I think, plain from *Heb. viii. 4.* *If he were on Earth he should not be a Priest, seeing that there are Priests that offer Gifts according to the Law.* There were other Priests to whom it legally belonged to officiate according to the *Mosaical Law*, whose Right it was to enter into the Sanctuary once a Year, to make Atonement for the People, and who had Offerings suited to such a Tabernacle and Sanctuary. Our *Lord Jesus* was to officiate in a more glorious Sanctuary, and had something more excellent to offer than they: He was to discharge the more eminent Offices of *High-Priest* in the true Tabernacle, *i. e.* in Heaven it self. *Such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, [i. e. not liable to be polluted by living amongst them] and*
made

made higher than the Heavens. Heb. viii. 26.

But that I may discourse a little, concerning this Point, with some Distinctness; I will,

1. Take Notice of a common Mistake with Respect to the Office of a Priest.

2. I will enquire what Offices were peculiar to the Priests under the Law, in order to understand more clearly, what it is that *our Lord Jesus* does for his People in the Quality of a Priest.

I am,

1. To take Notice of a common Mistake with Respect to the Office of a Priest.

It has, I believe, been generally thought, that the offering, and especially the killing of the Sacrifices were peculiar Branches of the Priest's Office; and therefore it has been received as an undoubted Truth, that *our Lord Jesus* in giving himself up to Death, and in laying down his Life for us, performed the Office of a *Priest*.

Now it appears to me, that the offering of the Sacrifices to be kill'd, and the slaying of them, were so far from being peculiar Branches of the Priest's Office, that they properly belonged to the People, and were generally performed by them. *

* Bishop Patrick's Comment. on Levit. i. 5. Dr. Cudworth on the Lord's Supper. p. 27, 28, 29. Outram de Sacrific. Lib. I. Cap. 15. Pool's English Annot. on Levit. xiv. 5.

If it be made appear that the People were at Liberty to kill their own Sacrifices, it will not be in the least doubted, but they might first offer them to God.

That this Matter may be set in a clear Light, I will give Instances of it in several Kinds of Sacrifices. I will begin,

1. With the Passover, which, I doubt not, was both a Sacrifice, and a Type of Christ. It is called *the Sacrifice of the Lord's Passover*. Exod. xii. 27. and in a peculiar Manner *God's Sacrifice*. Exod. xxiii. 18. and xxxiv. 25. And the *Priests* sprinkled the Blood upon the Altar, as was usual in other Sacrifices. 2 *Chron.* xxx. 16. And the *Apostle* says, *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* 1 *Cor.* v. 7. which to me, is a plain Proof that the *Jewish* Passover was typical of the Death of Christ, who is expressly called the *Lamb of God*.

Now I believe, every Man was at Liberty to kill his own Passover, and had no need to have Recourse to the *Priest* to do it for him.

It is, I think, certain, that at the first Institution of the *Passover* every Man had this Liberty granted him. *Exod.* xii. 6. Indeed, this was before the giving of the Law, and the appointing the *Levitical* Priesthood; but I do not find in the Laws of *Moses*, that any Restraint was afterwards laid upon their Liberty.

It is true, the *Levites* killed the famous *Passover* in *Hezekiah's* Time; but the Text would incline one to think, that the Reason was because several of the People were unclean, and that they killed the *Passover* only for such as were unclean. 2 Chron. xxx. 17. *There were many in the Congregation that were not sanctified; therefore the Levites had the Charge of killing the Passover for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord.* And 'tis not unlikely that the Reason why the *Levites* in *Josiah's* Time, and in the Days of *Ezra* killed the *Passover*, might be the same. See 2 Chron. xxxv. 6, 11. *Ezra* vi. 20.

It may be said, that the Lamb that was kill'd at the *Passover*, tho' it was a Sacrifice, and typified the Death of Christ the true Paschal Lamb, was properly a *Thank-Offering*, and that therefore 'tis not so much to be wonder'd at that it might be killed by the People, as all *Peace-Offerings* were. Lev. iii. 2, 8, 13.

I will therefore proceed to observe,

2. That the *Burnt-Offerings* under the Law, which are said to make Atonement. Levit. xiv. 20. were killed by the People. Levit. i. 4, 5. *If any Man bring a Burnt-Offering unto the Lord, he shall lay his Hand upon the Head of the Burnt-Offering, and he shall kill the Bullock before the Lord,*
and

and the Priests Aaron's Sons shall take the Blood.

But it may be replied, that *Burnt-Offerings*, tho' they are said to have made Atonement, were not properly *expiatory Sacrifices*.

And therefore I will add,

3. That *Sin-Offerings* might be killed by the People. *Lev. iv. 23, 24. When a Ruler hath sinned, he shall bring his Offering a Kid of the Goats, and he shall lay his Hand upon the Head thereof, and kill it in the Place where they kill the Burnt-Offering before the Lord: it is a Sin-Offering. And so ver. 27, 28, 29, 32, 33. If any one of the common People sin, — He shall bring his Offering, a Kid of the Goats, — And he shall lay his Hand upon the Head of the Sin-Offering, and slay the Sin-Offering in the Place of the Burnt-Offering, — And if he bring a Lamb for a Sin-Offering — He shall lay his Hand upon the Head of the Sin Offering, and slay it for a Sin-Offering, in the Place where they kill the Burnt-Offering.*

But still it may be urged, that these were Offerings only for *particular Persons*, and therefore were Sacrifices of an *inferior Nature*, and did not so properly typify the Death of Christ, which he suffered for the Sins of the *whole World*.

In reply I remark,

4. That it does not appear to me, to have been peculiar to the *Priests* to kill the Sacrifices that were offered for the Sins of the *whole Congregation*; we find Instructions concerning such Sacrifices in *Lev. iv. 13, 14, 15.* *If the whole Congregation of Israel shall sin through Ignorance, they shall offer a young Bullock for the Sin, and bring him before the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the Elders of the Congregation shall lay their Hands upon the Head of the Bullock before the Lord: and the Bullock shall be killed before the Lord.* Now, tho' there are no exprefs Orders given who should kill the Bullock, yet it is most likely, that some of the *Elders* who laid their Hands upon his Head, undertook this Service, in regard, in all other Cases, it was usual for the Person who laid his Hand upon the Offering to slay it before the Lord.

This was a Sacrifice, which was not only peculiarly typical of Christ's Sacrifice, on the Account of its being offer'd for the Sins of the *whole Congregation of Israel*, but because it was *burnt without the Camp*, and *the Blood thereof sprinkled before the Lord, even before the Veil.* *Lev. iv. 17, 21.* *Heb. xiii. 12.*

The *red Heifer* mentioned *Numb. xix.* (which, tho' not slain at the Altar, was a sort of *Sin-Offering for the whole Congregation*

tion of Israel, and as an eminent Type of Christ. *Heb. ix. 13.*) was not killed by the *Priest*, but by some other Person appointed by him, ver. 3.

It may be farther urg'd, that tho' the Sacrifices which have been mentioned were typical of Christ's Sacrifice, and killed by the People, the Sacrifice, which was offered up unto God for the *whole Congregation of Israel on the great Day of Atonement*, did more especially prefigure the Death of Christ, and was expressly ordered to be first offered, and afterwards to be killed by the *High-Priest* himself, as may be seen *Lev. xvi. 9, 15.*

It must be owned, indeed, that the annual Sacrifice for the whole Congregation of *Israel*, which was on the great Day of Expiation, was an eminent Type of the Death of Christ for the Sins of the whole World, in regard the Bodies of the slain Beasts were burnt without the Camp, and their Blood carried within the Veil. And it cannot be denied, that the *High-Priest* is expressly ordered to present the Sacrifices before the Lord, and afterwards to kill them with his own Hands. But then I am inclined to think, as the People were commanded to offer their own Sacrifices at the Door of the Tabernacle to lay their Hands upon them, and afterwards to kill them, that the principal, if not the only, Reason

why the *High-Priest* is commanded to slay the Goat that was offered for the whole Congregation, was because it was impossible for the People to do it themselves in a Body, any otherwise than by a Representation; and none was more fit to act in the Person of the whole Nation of *Israel* on such an Occasion, than the *High Priest*. It appears to me most probable, that he did not perform this Service as something appropriated to his Office, but purely in the Name, and as sustaining the Person of the People whose Sacrifice it was. And the same, I am apt to think, must be said concerning our Lord *Jesus*, who sanctified himself for our Sakes, and laid down his Life for us, viz. that in doing so, he represented our Persons, and did not act under the peculiar Character of a *Priest*, or perform the Service as something incommunicably inherent in the *Priesthood*. *

2. I am to enquire what Offices were peculiar to the Priests under the Law, in order to understand more clearly, what it is that our Lord *Jesus* does for his People in the Quality of a *Priest*.

I shall only consider such Branches of their Office, as may help to give Light in the present Enquiry.

* Outram. Lib. II. Cap. 3.

1. Then, the *Priest* received the Blood, and sprinkled it either before the Veil, *Lev.* iv. 6, 17. (putting some of it upon the Horns of the Altar of sweet Incense. *v.* 7, 18.) or round about upon the Altar of Burnt-Offering; *Lev.* i. 5, 21. iii. 2, 8. vii. 2. or else, with his Finger he put part of it upon the Horns of the Altar of Burnt-Offering, and poured out the rest at the Bottom thereof. *Lev.* iv. 25.

When, in this Manner, he had offered the Blood, he afterwards offered several Parts of the Sacrifice, by burning them upon the Altar of Burnt-Offering. *Lev.* i. 9. iii. 3, 8,—14, &c.

These were Offices appropriated to the *Priesthood*, no Stranger daring to intermeddle with them.

Sprinkling the Blood, in particular, was looked upon as the very Essence of a Sacrifice, and to be so peculiar to the *Priest*, that when a Bird was killed at the Altar, which was to be done by the wringing off his Head, and therefore sprinkling of the Blood was immediately conjunct with the killing of it, none but the *Priest* might do it. *Lev.* i. 15. though in other Cases, as has been already observed, the People were at Liberty to kill their own Sacrifices.

Under this Head, I must take Notice of an Office peculiar to the *High-Priest*.

On the great Day of Expiation he went into the most Holy Place with Blood to make Atonement for the whole Congregation of *Israel*, by sprinkling it *upon the Mercy-Seat, and before the Mercy-Seat.* Lev. xvi. 15, 17. Heb. ix. 7.

Upon the whole, nothing can be plainer, than that the Offering of the slain Sacrifice, and particularly the Blood thereof, was of chief Account, and peculiar to the *Priests.*

After this manner *our Lord Jesus* officiates as the High-Priest of our Profession. *By his own Blood he entered in once into the Holy Place.* Heb ix. 12. Then he *offer'd himself without Spot to God.* ver. 14. Then he *appears in the Presence of God for us.* ver. 24. *And has no Need to offer himself often, as the High-Priest entreth into the Holy Place, every Year, with Blood of others,* ver. 25. For having once offered himself before God with his Blood, *He sat down for ever at the Right-Hand of God.* Heb. x. 12. And there he makes Atonement for us, 1 *Job.* ii. 2. *Heb.* ii. 17, 18.

2. It was the Business of the *High-Priest* to purify the Place where God had his special Residence, and where the People presented themselves before him. Thus *Moses*, officiating as extraordinary *High-Priest*, *sprinkled the Tabernacle with Blood.* Heb. ix. 21. And after him, *Aaron*, and his Successors

cessors made an Atonement for the Tabernacle and Holy Place, on the great Day of Expiation. Thus we read, Levit. xvi. 16. *He shall make an Atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the Children of Israel, and because of their Transgressions in all their Sins. And so shall he do for the Tabernacle of the Congregation that remaineth among them, in the Midst of their Uncleanness.*

In like manner, the *Christian High-Priest* is said to have purified *the heavenly Things themselves with his own Blood.* Heb. ix. 23.

By *heavenly Things* must, I think, be meant Heaven it self; otherwise, it will be difficult to shew the Justness of the Apostles Parallel. By the *Patterns of the Things in the Heavens*, which the *High-Priest* is said to have purified, must especially be meant the Tabernacle, and particularly the most Holy Place; and therefore, I think, it will follow, that by *heavenly Things*, which our *High-Priest* is said to purify, must be meant Heaven itself, or the true Holy of Holies.

3. Burning of Incense upon the Golden Altar was an Office appropriated to the *Priests* under the Law. This was at least given in Charge to *Aaron* Exod. xxx. 7. but was afterwards executed by the *ordinary Priests*, as is manifest from *Luke* i. 8, 9. Where we have an Account, that *Zacharias*

offered Incense in his Turn, according to the Custom of the Priest's Office.

Our Lord Jesus is represented in St. John's Vision, as having a Golden Censer and much Incense, which he offers with the Prayers of all Saints, upon a Golden Altar, which is before the Throne. Rev. viii. 3.

4. It was an Office appropriated to the Priesthood to bless the People. *Melchisedec Priest of the most high God blessed Abraham, and he said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth.* Gen. xiv. 19. In like Manner, it was given in Charge to Aaron and his Sons to bless the People. Numb. vi. 22, 23. *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron and his Sons, saying, on this wise ye shall bless the Children of Israel.* And it is said concerning the Priests expressly, *that God had chosen them to minister to him, and to bless the People in the Name of the Lord.* Deut. xxi. 5.

Now our Lord Jesus, who has taken up his Abode in the heavenly Sanctuary, is invested with full Power to bless his People; and in this Respect, as well as in all others, he greatly excels all the Priests that have been before him. *Melchisedec* is said to bless *Abraham*; but the Meaning is only, that he prayed to God to bless him. *He blessed him, and said, (i. e. saying) Blessed be Abraham of the most high God.* In like Manner,

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Manner, though the *Priests* under the Law are commanded to bless the Children of *Israel*, the plain Meaning of the Command is, to pray to God to bless them, as appears from the Form of Blessing that is given them, which begins thus, *the Lord bless thee, and keep thee*, &c. Numb. vi. 23, 24.

Our Lord *Jesus* does not only intercede with God for a Blessing on his People; but, by Virtue of the Power and Authority that is given him, blesseth them himself. After his Resurrection, he said unto his Disciples, *all Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth, and lo I am with you alway, unto the End of the World.* Matt. xxviii. 18, 20. with us, surely, to bless us with his special Presence and Grace.

When our Lord ascended up on high, he led Captivity Captive, and received Gifts for Men. Psal. lxxviii. 18. Being raised from the dead, God sent him to bless the *Jews* in particular, in turning away every one of them from their Iniquities. Acts iii. 26. And he is said to be exalted to be a Prince and a SAVIOUR, to give Repentance to *Israel*, and Remission of Sins. Acts v. 31. And the Text tells us, that being consecrated by his Death to the High-Priesthood, he became the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him. It is in Heaven especially, that he has Power over all Flesh, to give eternal Life to as many as are given him. Joh. xvii.

2. He

2. *He, that liveth and was dead, and is alive evermore, has the Keys of Hell * and of Death. Rev. i. 18. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive this Power of blessing his People. Being consecrated High-Priest by his own Blood, wherewith he is entered into the heavenly Sanctuary, he is become the Dispenser of every good, and every perfect Gift. He gives Grace and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,*

Thus I have endeavoured to make it appear, that our Lord exercises his *sacerdotal Function* chiefly in Heaven.

This will cast some Light upon the following Texts of Scripture, which will appear to have a manifest Relation to this Matter.

Rom. iv. 25. *Who was delivered for our Offences, and raised again for our Justification.* The Lord Jesus was offered up to God for us, as the Sacrifices under the Law were offered up for the Sins of the Jews. And as the Blood of the Sacrifices on the great Day of Atonement was carried by the *High-Priest* into the Sanctuary, to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People; so our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, that he might appear for us in Heaven with

* The Word, which we translate Hell, signifies in this Place the invisible World.

his Blood, and thereby make Atonement for us.

So also Rom. v. 10. *If when we were Enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his Life.* i. e. by his Intercession for us as our *High-Priest*, and by Virtue of the Blood of Sprinkling, whereby we have an abundant Entrance ministred to us into the Holiest, the Heavenly Sanctuary.

The last Text that I shall mention, is Rom. viii. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the Right-Hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for us.* As our Lord Jesus died to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to deliver us from the Wrath to come, we are furnished with Matter of Thankfulness and Triumph. But his Resurrection from the dead, and Ascension into Heaven, in order to make Intercession for us with his Blood, to prepare Mansions of Glory for us, and to bless us with all spiritual Blessings from the heavenly Sanctuary, is the most solid Foundation of Peace and Comfort, of Trust and Confidence.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let us all be exhorted to love the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us, and gave himself

self for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to reconcile us unto God, that he might have somewhat to offer, when admitted into the heavenly Sanctuary, and exalted at the Right-Hand of God. He liv'd and dy'd for the Good of Souls, and when he had finished here, he ascended up into Heaven, *to appear in the Presence of God for us. We ought not, henceforth, to live unto ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again.*

2. Let us make our serious and importunate Applications to God for pardoning Mercy, and for Grace to help us in every Time of Need; and let us have great Confidence of Acceptance, and Success in these our Applications. I cannot do better, than address my self to you in the Words of the Apostle to the *Hebrews*. Chap. x. ver. 19—22. *Having therefore, Brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the Veil, that is to say, his Flesh; and having an High-Priest over the House of God; let us draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith.*

As Believers in Christ may derive Comfort from his Death; so his Life furnishes them with no less important Matter of Consolation and Joy. He is no less mindful of us in his State of Exaltation, and Glo-

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ry, than he was in his State of Humiliation and Suffering. His Intercession in Heaven, is of as great Service to us, as his Death upon the Cross. *As he appeared in the End of the World, to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself.* Heb. ix. 26. so he ascended up into Heaven, to prosecute the Design of our Salvation, by presenting his sacrificed Body before God in the heavenly Sanctuary; by representing to him all our Wants and Necessities; and by recommending our Addresses for Pardon and Grace to his compassionate and favourable Regard. *If any Man Sin, we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous.* 1 Joh. ii. 1. His Death laid the Foundation of our Hope and Comfort; but he is said *to be able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for you.* Heb. vii. 25. It is by virtue of his Intercession for us, that we obtain the Forgiveness of all our Sins, and a reasonable Supply of all our Wants. In a Word, all our spiritual Blessings and Enjoyments are the Procurement of his prevalent Intercession, and are given us for his Sake.

SER

S E R M O N X.

Obedience to Christ, the Way to Salvation.

H E B. v. 9.

*And being made perfect, he became
the Author of eternal Salvation to
all that obey him.*

IN the preceding Discourse, I have considered what is meant by the Expression *being made perfect*, and have shewn the Meaning to be, *that Christ was consecrated to the Priesthood by his Death.*

I have observed the remarkable Difference that there is between the *Consecration* of the *Priests of old*, and that of the *Christian High-Priest*, and have endeavoured to assign the Reasons of it.

I have also fully considered a plain Consequence from the preceding Observation that Christ was consecrated to the *Priest-*
hood

hood by dying for us ; viz. *that he did not properly exercise his sacerdotal Function till after his Death.*

I now proceed to shew,

III. That they who obey *our Lord Jesus Christ* shall obtain eternal Salvation thro' his Influence and Intercession ; and that it is in vain for any to hope for Salvation that do not obey him.

The latter part of the Proposition is manifestly implied in the Text, and I will first consider it.

I say then that Christ will not bestow eternal Salvation on those that are disobedient to his Laws.

In discoursing on this Head, I will shew,

1. That *Christians* are under the Government of Christ.

2. That it is in vain to rely upon the Sufferings and Intercession of Christ for Salvation, as long as we are disobedient to his Laws.

I will then proceed to shew,

3. That Obedience to the Laws of Christ will entitle us, by Virtue of his Intercession, to eternal Salvation.

I am,

1. To shew that *Christians* are under the Government of Christ.

Not that we are to imagine that God has given up his Right of Dominion over us, or
that

that we are no longer his Subjects ; but that the *Lord Jesus Christ* is invested with the Authority of enacting Laws, and of enforcing them with Rewards and Punishments ; and we are obliged, by Virtue of God's solemn Designation of his Son to be our King and Ruler, to submit to his Authority, and to obey all his Commandments, and in being thus *the Servants of Christ*, *we shall do the Will of God.* Eph. vi. 6.

Now 'tis plain that we are the Subjects of Christ ; that he is the *Christian Lawgiver* ; and that to be truly Christians, is to be obedient to his Laws.

The Apostle *Paul*, acquainting the *Corinthians* that he *became all things to all Men ; that he was to them that were under the Law, as under the Law, and to them that were without Law, as without Law ;* takes care to add, to prevent a bad Construction being put upon his Words, *that he was not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ.* 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21.

Tho' we are under no Obligation to the Ceremonial Laws of *Moses*, nor, indeed, to any of *Moses's* Laws, consider'd as the Terms of God's Covenant with his antient People the *Jews*, or as the Civil Laws of their Country, we must not imagine that we are without Law. Tho' *Moses* was only a Lawgiver to the *Jews*, and therefore cou'd not, by Virtue of his Authority or Commission,

mission, lay any under an Obligation to his Laws excepting the *Jews*, yet a greater than *Moses*, even Christ, is made Head of the Christian Church, and invested with full Power of ruling us according to his own Laws. And tho' he does not oblige us to keep the Ceremonial Laws of the *Jews*, whatever was of necessary and eternal Obligation among *Moses's* Laws, he has strictly injoyn'd in his Gospel, and enforced with much more powerful Sanctions than any that appear in the Books of *Moses*.

In his famous *Sermon* upon the Mount, he exerts his Authority as *Christian Law-giver*. He explains the full Meaning of some Moral Precepts, that had been made void by the corrupt Glosses and Interpretations of the *Jewish* Doctors, and establishes them by his own Authority. He does not say, in the usual Language of the *Prophets*, *thus saith the Lord*, but *I say unto you*; which seems to intimate to us at least, that his Authority was superior to that of a *Prophet*.

He may be even said to have added, in some Sense, to the Moral Precepts of the Law. He says expressly, that he has given a *new Commandment*, and that the observing of it is to be the distinguishing Characteristick of his Disciples. *John* xiii. 34, 35. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all Men*
Z know

know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.

Indeed, in antient Times, People were obliged to love their Neighbours as themselves. But our Lord's Commandment is new, in as much as it obligeth us to love one another as Christ hath loved us, even to lay down our Lives for the Brethren. 1 *John* iii. 16. This seems to be the principal Reason why it is called a new Commandment, as may appear more fully, by considering, *John* xv. 12, 13. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends.* This explains what he meant by *loving one another, as he had loved them.* He was about to give them a new Proof of his Love by dying for them, and in Imitation of his Example, he obliges his Disciples to lay down their Lives for the Brethren. This is Christian Charity, strictly enjoined by the *Christian Lawgiver*, but not required either by the Law of Nature, or of *Moses*.

As *our Lord* explained, in an Authoritative Manner, antient Laws, and even added to the Number of the moral Precepts of *Moses*, 'tis at least highly probable, that he had a Regal Power even when upon Earth.

There are many other things that seem to confirm the Truth of the Observation; and particularly,

particularly, the following Words, which our Lord spoke unto his Disciples, the Night in which he was betrayed. *I appoint, says he, unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed to me.* Luke xxii. 29. This, I think, must be own'd to be an Act of Regal Power.

I shall only add, that our Lord assumes the Title of King, in that good Confession, which he witnessed before *Pontius Pilate*, when in Answer to *Pilate's* Question, *art thou a King then?* He replied, *thou sayest I am a King*: which, according to an usual Way of Speaking amongst the *Jews*, is as much as to say, what thou sayest is true, I am indeed a King. *John* xviii. 37.

They that believed on him when he was upon Earth, received him as the *King of Israel*, and submitted to his Government and Authority. *Nathaniel* professed his Faith in him in the following Words; *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.* *John* i. 49. This was a just Expression of his Faith, as appears from our *Saviour's* Reply. ver. 50.

But notwithstanding Christ exercised a Royal Authority when upon Earth, I think 'tis plain, that he had a more full, and extensive Dominion given him after his Resurrection from the Dead. When he was upon Earth, he said, *I can of my self do nothing, as I hear I judge.* *Joh.* v. 30. and *Joh.* xii. 49,

50. *I have not spoken of my self; but the Father which sent me, he gave me Commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father sent me, so I speak.*

But after his Resurrection, he says, *all Power is given me in Heaven and on Earth, go therefore, and teach all Nations, &c. Mat. xxviii. 18.*

'Tis certain that he had Power given him after his Resurrection, as the Reward of his Sufferings, which he was not possessed of before his Death. *Because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, God highly exalted him, and gave him a Name, which is above every Name; that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth. Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10. The Angels, in St. John's Vision, say, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing. Rev. v. 12. When God raised Christ from the Dead, he set him at his own right Hand, in the Heavenly Places, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named not only in this World, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his Feet, and*
gave

gave him to be Head over all things to the Church. Eph. i. 20, 21, 22.

Nothing is more evident, than that Christ has a Sovereign Dominion over the whole World. He establishes antient Laws, and explains them with a decisive Authority: He adds new ones, and fully settles the Terms of the Christian Salvation. He has Power to quicken whom he will, and to summon them to appear before his judgment Seat. And he can determine their final and everlasting State; can say, *depart ye cursed, and come ye blessed*; and none will be able to resist his Will, or to say unto him *what doest thou*. God hath given to him the Throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the House of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no End. Luke i. 32, 33. Daniel foresaw in his Vision, the Kingdom of Christ. Dan. vii. 13, 14. *I saw, says he, in the Night Visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the antient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages, should serve him; his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* St. John, when he had his Vision, heard many bearing Witness to Christ's

actual Possession of his Kingdom. *The seventh Angel*, says he, *sounded, and there were great Voices in Heaven, saying, the Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Rev. xi. 15.

As God has set his King on his holy Hill of Sion, and has given him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmost Parts of the Earth for his Possession, we are obliged to *kiss the Son*; to acknowledge his Authority over us, and to obey the Laws of his Gospel.

As he is appointed to reign over us, we should consult his Laws with a sincere Disposition to obey them, and look upon ourselves as his Subjects, and reckon, that Obedience to his Laws is the chief Service, that our Profession as Christians obliges us to. *The Householder*, in the Parable, expected that the Husbandmen would have revered his Son. We ought to receive the Son of God with Reverence and Submission; and should not, like the disobedient and unbelieving Jews, reject his Authority, saying, *we will not have this Man to rule over us.*

For our Encouragement to obey the Laws of Christ, the *Apostle* tells us, *that we are not under the Law, but under Grace.*

We are not under that severe Law which came by *Moses*; but under a Dispensation of Grace, which came by *Jesus Christ*. According

according to *Moses's* Law, every one that willfully transgressed any of the numerous Precepts of that burthensome Dispensation, was to be cut off from among the People. Num. xv. 30, 31. *The Soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that Soul shall be cut off from among his People, because he hath despised the Word of the Lord, and hath broken his Commandment, that Soul shall utterly be cut off, his Iniquity shall be upon him.* No Sacrifice was allowed in this Case; no Remission could be granted. The Law we are under to *Christ Jesus*, does not terrify us with such Severity. The Gospel proclaims Remission of Sin to all that truly repent. And in order to remove any Doubt that might remain, on the Account of the Greatness of the Offence, we are assured that *the Blood of the Lord Jesus cleanseth us from all Sin.* 1 John i. 7. We are not under the Law that gave the Knowledge of Sin, and could only acquit the Offender from Civil Guilt; could not furnish a Remedy for the wounded Conscience. We are under a Dispensation full of Grace and Mercy.

The Gospel, indeed, obliges us, to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts; and to live righteously, soberly, and godly. But then, if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our Sins.* So that

tho' we are under the Law to Christ, we are nevertheless under Grace. But because we are under Grace, are the Laws of Christ less obligatory than the Laws of *Moses*? or is it left to our own Choice, whether we will be the Servants of Christ, or of Sin? God forbid! The Laws of the Gospel, are delivered in Terms that are as binding as any of *Moses's* Laws, and are enforced with much greater Penalties; only they do not exclude such as are penitent from Hopes of Mercy, but give them the fullest Assurances of Pardon, and everlasting Life.

Tho' the Kingdom of Christ is a Kingdom of Grace; yet, never were the Subjects of any Dispensation, more obliged by the Laws they were under, than the Subjects of Christ's Kingdom. Under the *Mosaick Dispensation*, every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward. In like manner, under the *Dispensation of the Gospel*, all willful Impenitency, and obstinate Rebellion against the Authority of Christ shall be *punished with everlasting Destruction*. We are therefore obliged, at the same Time that we disclaim all Subjection to the Authority of *Moses*, to acknowledge the sovereign Dominion of the *Son of God* over the *Christian Church*, and to pay the sincerest Obedience to all the Laws, which either he, or his Apostles have delivered in the Gospel.

I will

I will make one Reflection, on what has been said under this Head.

Is the Church of Christ, the Kingdom of Christ? And does the Gospel contain the Laws of this Kingdom? Then we ought to be governed by the *Gospel*, and not by the *Decisions* of Men. There is no Authority upon Earth, that is binding in the Affairs of Conscience, and eternal Salvation. No Church, nor Council has any such Power. All their Decrees are an Encroachment on the Authority of Christ, especially if they claim an absolute Submission to them; and it is the Duty of Christ's Subjects to oppose all their Pretensions to such an Authority, by refusing them a Dominion over their Faith and Consciences, and by closely adhering to all the Laws of the Gospel.

We ought to assert our Freedom from every Yoke, excepting that of the *Lord Jesus*. He has the sole Right of settling the Terms of Acceptance with God. He only has the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, as the Phrase imports, an inherent Power of giving Laws to the Church.

His Apostles, indeed, as his Ambassadors, and Delegates under the extraordinary Conduct and Influence of the Spirit, and enabled to give full Proof of their Commission, had *the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, as it signifies a Power of declaring, in an authoritative Manner, the Laws of
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Christ's Kingdom, and the Terms of Christian Salvation ; but this was not a proper Regal Authority, an inherent Sovereignty and Dominion over the Church. They could put no other Yoke upon the Necks of the Disciples, than the Yoke of Christ. And therefore, the Apostle *Paul* disclaims all Pretensions to any such Power ; telling the *Corinthians*, that they had *no Dominion over their Faith*.

When our Lord, after his Resurrection, gave the *Apostles* a Commission to go and teach all Nations, he obliged them to teach them nothing but as he had commanded them. Mat. xxviii. 20.

If the *inspired Apostles* of our Lord and Saviour had no other Authority over the Church than this ; surely, *uninspired Men* have no Right to be *Lords over God's Heritage*.

I proceed to shew,

2. That it is in vain to rely upon the Sufferings and Intercession of the *Lord Jesus* for Salvation, as long as we are disobedient to his Laws. The Gospel does not give the least Ground of Hope to any, but those that truly forsake their Sins, and apply themselves to the Practice of universal Holiness. These are the express Conditions of our Acceptance with God ; this is the plain and repeated Doctrine of the Gospel. *If we live after the Flesh we shall die*, notwithstanding

standing all that Christ has done, and suffered for us, *There is no Condemnation*, it is true, *to them that are in Christ Jesus*; but then, it is the Character of such, *that they walk not after the Flesh*. Know ye not, saith the Apostle, *that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God! Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. These are some of the Works of the Flesh, and as many as are guilty of them, are without any saving Interest in the Fruits of Christ's Death and Intercession; *for they that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts.* Gal. v. 24.

In Order to our Acceptance with God, we must not only, in Obedience to Christ renounce and forsake our Sins, but must heartily endeavour to practise universal Holiness. We must not only *cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*, but must also, *perfect Holiness in the Fear of God.* 2 Cor. vii. 11. We are expressly told, *that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* Heb. xii. 14. And are cautioned by the Apostle *John*, not to imagine that we are Righteous, unless we ourselves are Doers of Righteousness. *Little Chil-*

Children, says he, let no Man deceive you, he that doth Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 Joh. iii. 7. I will only add the exprefs Declaration of our Lord himself, who surely does not exclude any from Salvation, that comply with the Terms of the Gospel. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Mat. vii. 21.

It is therefore, absolutely required by the Gospel, that we sincerely obey all the known Laws of God. This is necessary to our Acceptance, and eternal Salvation.

The Death and Intercession of Christ are of great Service to such as forsake and abandon their Lusts, and exercise themselves in the Practice of Virtue; but will avail nothing to the Salvation of impenitent and incorrigible Sinners. His Blood does not atone for Sins indulg'd, and continued in; but for Sins repented of, and forsaken.

That I may fully manifest the Truth of the Proposition, that I am endeavouring to establish; I will

1. Shew the Folly of expecting to be saved by the Sufferings and Intercession of Christ, without Obedience to him.

2. That it is one main Design of his Obedience and Sufferings, to reform us, or in other Words, to deliver us from the
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Power and Dominion of Satan, and to make us the Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom.

3. I will shew that we are really ignorant of Christ as long as we live in Disobedience to his Laws.

4. That we shall be acquitted or condemned at the Day of Judgment according to our Love and Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am,

1. To shew the ridiculous Folly of expecting to be saved by the Sufferings and Intercessions of Christ, without Obedience to him. Is it not the greatest Folly to expect that the unwearied Pains our Lord took for the Good of Souls ; that his Agony in the Garden ; his Death upon the Cross, or his Intercession in Heaven should be of any saving Benefit to those, who instead of being prevailed upon, by the greatest Instance of Love, to make any Returns of Gratitude, have been disobedient to all the Calls of the Gospel, and have all their Lives affronted the Saviour of their Souls, and joined in Rebellion with his greatest Adversary? Shall Sinners rely on the Merits of that Jesus for Pardon and Salvation, whose Authority they despise, and whose Laws they trample under their Feet? Shall they apply to themselves the Merits of Christ, who, instead of being prevail'd upon by the Mercy

cy and Grace of the Gospel, to renounce and forsake their Sins, have taken Encouragement from thence to continue in Sin? Is this confident Reliance on the Merits of Christ true and saving Faith? Is this all the Respect that is due to him, by Virtue of the Gospel Covenant? And may Sinners, who have nothing else to plead, with Confidence expect Acceptance, and final Justification through Christ? Egregious Folly! Hear our Lord himself; hear him reprove the Folly of such confident Pretenders to saving Faith. Luke vi. 46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I say?* In another Place, he reproves the Folly of those who receive his Instructions, and make Profession of his Religion, but obey not his Laws in their Lives and Conversations, by comparing them to a foolish Man which built his House upon the Sand. *And the Rain descended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon the House: And it fell, and great was the Fall of it.* Mat. vii. 26, 27. Impenitent Sinners, who have persevered in Vice and Immorality, and stood out against all the Calls of the Gospel to Repentance, and who yet rely on the Merits of Christ for Salvation, are guilty of the Folly of Building on a sandy Foundation, and will be found unable to stand before God in Judgment.

2. It is one main Design of the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ to reform us, or in other Words, to deliver us from the Power and Dominion of Satan, and to make us the Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom. The Sufferings of Christ are so far from meriting Salvation for impenitent Sinners, that the Design and End of them is defeated, by their Impiety and continued Immoralities. *For to this End, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the Dead and Living.* Rom. xiv.

9. The great Design of his Death is to oblige us *not to live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again.* If the meritorious Death of the Lord Jesus has not this saving Influence upon us; if it does not produce this happy Effect in our Lives and Conversations; with what Confidence soever we may apply the Merit of it to ourselves in this World, and how great soever our Satisfaction may be arising from such an Application, we shall find at the Day of Judgment, that our Claim to it is altogether groundless and presumptuous. If we cannot shew the Fruit of it in the Change both of Heart and Life, it will be in vain to seek for Refuge in the Merit of it. To appeal, in such a Case, to what Christ has done and suffered for us, would be a piece of formal Mockery, and issue in our greater Condemnation.

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As Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity; if we are not redeemed from the Power and Dominion of Sin, it is absurd to expect that we should be redeemed from the Punishment thereof; or if any Man will have it, that by Redeeming us from all Iniquity, is meant Redeeming us from all the Guilt and Punishment of our Sins; he is to consider, that it is added, *and to purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* Tit. ii. 14. If this Design of Christ's Death does not succeed, it is impossible that the other should take Effect.

I will only add one Text more, to shew that a principal Design of Christ's Death was to bring about, and establish a Reformation in the World; and, consequently, that unless the New-Creature be formed within us, by Virtue of, the Power and Influence thereof, it will be in vain for us to rely upon the Merit of his Sufferings. 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin, should live unto Righteousness.* It was intended that the Love of Christ in dying for us, and the Victory that was thereby obtained over all our Enemies, should ingage us to make him the Return of a grateful and cheerful Obedience. If instead of this, we return him Affronts and Disobedience, it must be the most astonishing Confidence, to

rely upon the Merits of his Death for our Salvation.

I proceed to shew,

3. That we are so far from having any Interest in Christ, and the Christian Salvation, if we do not obey him, that we do not so much as know him. 1 Joh. ii. 3, 4. *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Lyar, and the Truth is not in him.* The Apostle Peter exhorting to the Practice of a great many Duties, adds the following words; *For if these Things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful, in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these Things is blind, and cannot see afar off.* 2 Pet. i. 8, 9. And to the same Purpose, is 1 John iii. 6. *Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.*

We may know him, in the same Manner that the Devil in the Possessed, is said to have known him. *I know thee, says he, who thou art, the Holy One of God.* Luke iv. 34. and v. 41. *Devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, thou art Christ the Son of God.*

I may address myself to you in the Language of the Apostle James. *Ye believe*

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that Christ is the Holy One of God, and the promised Messiah, ye do well. The Devils also believe and tremble. But be not deceived, this is not the saving Knowledge of Christ; this barren and unfruitful Knowledge will aggravate your Guilt, and sink you the deeper into Hell; you will perish without Remedy, and without Mercy. And though you should plead that you know him, and have been intimately acquainted with him; and that you have eaten and drank in his Presence, and that he has taught in your Streets, he will not make any Account of such Knowledge, but will say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity. Luke xiii. 26, 27.

To know the Lord Jesus in a saving Manner, is to love him; and to love him, is to keep his Commandments. Joh. xiv. 21. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*

If I should apply myself directly to any of them that are under the reigning Power of habitual Sins, and should tell them, that they know not Christ, I am afraid they would resent it, and look upon me as a false Accuser: But if they will not hear me, hear the Apostle John once more. *He that saith I know him and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Lyar, and the Truth is not in him.* You may know, indeed, that he
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is our Advocate with the Father, and the Propitiation for our Sins: You have long enjoyed the Light of the Gospel, and the Doctrines of Christianity have been frequently inculcated, and sufficiently explained to you. And perhaps you can talk with greater Fluency about free Grace, and the Merits of Christ, and are more ready at quoting Scripture, in Defence of your Notions, than many of your Neighbours; and this Knowledge may have puffed you up with high Conceits of your great Proficiency in *Christianity*; but be not deceived, this is all *falsly pretended Knowledge*, and you must bear to be told this ungrateful Truth, *that you know not Christ*. And if you do not know him, can you hope to be saved by him? Have you heard so much of the Love and Sufferings of the *Lord Jesus* on your Behalf, and yet not know him? Your Case is worse than if you had never heard of that *sacred Name*, by which alone we can be saved. You may pretend to pity those Parts of the World that are ignorant of the Gospel, and think yourselves much happier than they; but be advised, first and principally, to pity yourselves. Remember the Wo denounced against the Cities of *Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum*, that had enjoyed so much of Christ's Presence, and wherein most of his mighty Works were done, who nevertheless remain-

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ed impenitent. Mat. i. 20—24. *Wo unto thee Chorazin, Wo unto thee Bethsaida ; for if the mighty Works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, in Sackcloth and Ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you. &c.*

If the Doctrines of the Gospel concerning Christ, which we pretend to know and believe, do not work a real Reformation in our Hearts and Lives ; if by *beholding as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord*, we are not changed into the *same Image, from Glory to Glory* ; we have no Right to the Merits of Christ, no Interest in the Blood of Atonement ; and it is the most dangerous Folly in the World, to rely on Christ, in such an unsanctified and unpardoned State. *Though you had all Knowledge and understood all Mysteries ; yet if you have not so learned Christ, as to put off concerning the former Conversation, the old Man which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts ; and if you are not renewed in the Spirit of your Minds ; and have not put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness, you have not been instructed in him as the Truth is in Jesus.* Eph. iv. 20—24. And the Grace and Merits of Christ, will be so far from being of any saving Advantage to you,

you, unless ye truly repent, that you will be punished the more severely for turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, and for treading under Foot the inestimable Privileges of the Gospel.

I proceed to observe,

4. That Sentence will be passed upon us at the Day of Judgment according to our Love and Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. When our Lord represents the Proceedings of the Day of Judgment, he acquaints us, that he will say to such as have discovered their Love to him, by exercising Offices of Charity towards his Members ; *come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World ; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink, &c.* But to such as shewed no regard for him, by ministring to his suffering Members, he will say, *depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels ; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no Meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink, &c.* The unbelieving Jews, who would not submit to the Government and Authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, were punished with a most severe and exemplary temporal Vengeance. *Luke xix. 27.* In like manner, Christ will punish with everlasting Destruction, all his open and avowed Enemies ;

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and all, who, though they had professed Friendship to him, were nevertheless Enemies to his Government, and disobedient to his Laws. *When he shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, he will take Vengeance on them that obey not his Gospel.* 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. If we live not in Conformity to the Laws and Institutions of the Gospel, according to which we shall be judged at the last Day. *Rom. ii. 16.* we must inevitably perish, and sink under the Weight of the severest Threatnings.

I proceed to the Consideration of the last Proposition.

3. Obedience to the Laws of Christ will intitle us, by virtue of his Intercession, to eternal Salvation. Being exalted at the right Hand of God, he intercedes especially for those that obey the Laws of his Gospel; and the most distinguishing Blessing that he procures for them is *everlasting Happiness. The Gift of God, saith the Apostle, is eternal Life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Rom. vi. 23.

This is unspeakable Grace, and not possible to be merited by the most constant and religious Service; for we are taught by our Lord to acknowledge, *even though we should have done all those Things that are commanded us, that we are unprofitable Servants,*

Servants, and have done only that which was our Duty to do. Luke xvii. 10.

But notwithstanding the best of Christ's Disciples are far from deserving that their Obedience should be rewarded with everlasting Life; as he procures it for them by virtue of his Intercession, and has been pleased to promise it them in his Gospel; and as they are encouraged in their Obedience, with the Prospect of it, they may lay Claim to it as of Right belonging to them; according to *Rev. xxii. 12, 14. Behold, I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give every Man according as his Work shall be. Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in thro' the Gates into the City.*

If we are sincerely the Servants of Christ, our own Unworthiness should not discourage us, and make us despair of everlasting Happiness; *for it is our Father's good Pleasure to give us the Kingdom.* Luke xii. 32.

Having shewn you the Necessity and the Advantage of obeying the Laws of Christ, I will observe, by Way of *Inference* from what has been said, that it appears to be a principal Branch of a Minister's Duty, to explain the Nature of those Laws, and to recommend Obedience to them, by the most persuasive Arguments.

I will here take Occasion to consider the Point of *preaching Christ*; it is a Subject that very well deserves a distinct Consideration; and, I think, I have here a fair Opportunity of doing it.

Preaching Christ is a Scripture Expression, and of great Importance and Significance. We meet with it, 2 Cor. iv. 5. *We preach not ourselves but [we preach] Christ Jesus the Lord.*

The *Apostle* is here vindicating himself against some Aspersions that had been cast upon him, and pleads his Sincerity in preaching the Gospel; *we have renounced*, says he, ver. 2. *the hidden Things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the Truth, commending ourselves to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God.* He observes, that if the Gospel was hid from any, to whom he preached it, it was no Fault of his; he was no way to be blamed for it; *for he did not preach himself*, [i. e. did not consult his own Honour and Advantage in preaching the Gospel] *but Christ Jesus the Lord* [i. e. his principal Aim was the Service and Glory of Christ].

From hence it is manifest, that *to preach Christ*, is to endeavour, with Plainness and Sincerity, to promote his Interest and Glory in the World. This should be the great Care and Concern of every one, in preach-
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ing the Gospel of Christ; and no Method of preaching, that has a manifest Tendency that way, should be despised as unfavoury, or unprofitable.

Now nothing is more evident, than that the greatest Honour and Service that we can do to Christ, is to love him and keep his Commandments. The Way to glorify God, is to be *fruitful in good Works; our Light should so shine before Men, that they seeing our good Works, may glorify our Father who is in Heaven.* Mat. v. 16. If Ministers can prevail with their Hearers, *to be obedient in Word and Deed*, they certainly *preach Christ* in the most saving, and effectual manner.

Our Lord Jesus has erected a Spiritual Kingdom; and when any become truly the Subjects thereof, by submitting to his Authority, and by walking in the Way of his Commandments, his Glory and Interest are advanced, by such an Enlargement of his Kingdom.

Indeed, Christ may be preached, when there is no Design in the Preacher to promote his Interest and Glory, as appears from *Phil. i. 15—18.* where the Apostle takes notice, that as there were some *who preached Christ of Good-will*, so there were others, *who preached him from a Spirit of Envy and Contention, and not with any sincere Design to advance his Service and Glory;*
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but notwithstanding every Way, whether in Pretence, or in Truth, Christ was preached, and therein the Apostle rejoiced. It ought to be supposed, that the principal Matter of their preaching, was agreeable to what Christ and his Apostles had communicated to the World; otherwise, St. Paul would not have acknowledged that Christ was preached, nor could he have rejoiced in what they did in his Name.

Now what did *our Lord* and his *Apostles* principally insist upon, in their Addresses to the People? surely they *preached Christ* in all their Instructions and Persuasions; and it is the Duty of Ministers to copy after their Example. And People should be careful not to censure their Ministers as not *preaching Christ*, till they have carefully considered the Practice of our Saviour and his Apostles, lest at the same Time that they censure their Ministers, they should be found guilty of censuring *Christ himself*, and his *inspired Apostles*.

Our *Saviour* began his preaching, as well as his Forerunner the *Baptist*, with the *Doctrine of Repentance*. Mat. iv. 17. *From that Time Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.*

He begins his *famous Sermon upon the Mount*, with recommending Humility, Repentance, a meek and affable Disposition, an hearty

heartly Concern to be righteous before God, Mercy and Compassion, Purity of Heart, a peaceable Temper, and Patience under Sufferings for the Sake of Virtue and true Religion. Then he exhorts his Disciples to set the World a bright Example of Piety and Virtue; and warns them not to imagine that he is come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; and lets them know, *that whoever shall break one of the least of his Commandments, and shall teach Men so, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; and adds, but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Here it is plain, that it is not only a Minister's Duty to live conformably to the Laws of Christ, but to teach others the Necessity of doing the same.

Our Lord, in order to enforce his Exhortations to Obedience, adds the following Words; *for I say unto you, except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Then he goes on to shew, that the Christian Religion is designed to exalt and vindicate the several Precepts of the Law, by explaining their full Sense and Meaning, in Opposition to the false Colours put upon them, by the Scribes and Pharisees; and gives it in Charge to his Disciples, to keep them

them in the Sense in which he had explained them to them ; and exhorts them to be perfect in Holiness, even as our Father who is in Heaven is perfect.

After this, he proceeds to exhort his Disciples, to avoid several corrupt and hypocritical Practices, which the Scribes and Pharisees were notoriously guilty of ; such as giving Alms out of Ostentation, to be seen of Men, and praying in the Streets, and Places of publick Resort, that they may be praised of Men, for their extraordinary Sanctity and Devotion ; then he exhorts them to set their Affections on Things above ; and warns them not to be too solicitous about the Affairs of this World ; and instructs them in their Behaviour towards their Brethren.

After he has recommended these principal Duties of the Christian Life, he goes on to exhort them to pray to God for his Assistance, in the Discharge of all those Duties, which he had so fully explained to them, and takes Occasion from the Consideration of God's Bounty and Goodness to Mankind, to exhort his Disciples to be kind and beneficent to their Fellow-Creatures. Then he exhorts them to give all Diligence to walk in the narrow Path of Virtue ; and bids them beware of false Teachers, telling them that they may judge of their Sincerity by their Fruits ; and lets them know that every
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Man shall be rewarded at last, according to his Works, and that the Plea of having made Profession of Christ's Religion, unless we have had our Fruit unto Holiness, will avail us nothing.

He concludes his Sermon, with encouraging his Hearers to live according to the Instructions that he had given them, by shewing them the Wisdom of his Commandments, and the Folly of neglecting them.

This is a faint, and imperfect Summary of that admirable Sermon, which greatly affected the Multitude that heard it. *They were astonished at his Doctrine, for he taught them as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.*

Let us be careful not to make light of Sermons that are composed according to this excellent Model, as containing nothing but dry Morality ; if this is not *preaching Christ*, you know on whom the Reflexion must fall the heaviest.

After this, our Lord spake many Things to the People, concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, in Parables ; because they were not yet prepared, to receive a full and clear Revelation of some peculiar Doctrines and Mysteries of his Religion.

He exhorted them to believe in him. *Joh. vi. 29.* i. e. to believe that he was the promised *Messiah* ; this is plain and express Doctrine ; but he goes on, ver. 32, &c.

to talk of *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*, comparing the Doctrines which they were to believe concerning him, to Meat and Drink, and assures them, that by believing those Doctrines, they should obtain everlasting Life.

These are great and important Truths, which he preached to them, in Terms that were metaphorical, and not thoroughly understood by his Disciples. ver. 60. Nay we are told, *that after this, many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* ver. 66.

But though our Lord, for wise Reasons, did not fully explain some important Doctrines to his Followers, whilst he was upon Earth; it is certainly the Duty of Ministers, now that all the most useful Doctrines of Christianity are set in a clear Light, to recommend the Consideration and Belief of them to their Hearers, to explain such of them as are less obvious, and to direct and assist them in their Use and Application.

This, no doubt, is one principal Branch of *preaching Christ*, but not the only one, as I have already observed, and shall farther prove by what follows.

When *our Lord* sent forth his *Apostles* to preach, they began their Preaching in the same manner that both *He* and the *Baptist* had done before them. *Mark vi. 12. and they*

they went out, and preached that Men should repent. This was the Sum of their Doctrine which they taught the People. In the *Acts* as well as in all their *Epistles*, they assert and explain many Doctrines concerning Christ, as Occasion required. They prove his Resurrection from the dead, and acquaint us with the Benefits which accrue to us, by his Death and Intercession at the right Hand of God; and shew us the Necessity and Usefulness of Faith; but upon every Occasion, they exhort to the Practice of Virtue; and frequently set before us, the several Duties, which our Profession throughly obliges us to. The Apostle *Peter*, having urged the Practices of a great many Christian Virtues, and shewn how necessary they are, to procure Admittance into Christ's everlasting Kingdom, says, *I will not be negligent to put you always in Remembrance of these Things, though ye know them, and be established in the present Truth.* 2 Pet. i. 12.

This was the Method, the *Apostles* took to propagate the Gospel.

In order to shew you, yet more fully, that explaining the known Laws of God, and enforcing Obedience to them, is *preaching Christ*, as well as enlarging on the Benefits of Redemption, and the Promises of the Gospel; I will briefly consider, the Instructions which St. *Paul* gives to *Timothy*

and *Titus*, concerning the Things they were to teach, and recommend to their Hearers.

The *Apostle*, in his Epistle to *Timothy*, exhorts him, to guard his People against Seducers, by explaining to them the Extent of their Christian Liberty, and particularly, as to the eating of all Kinds of Meats; and adds, *if thou put the Brethren in Remembrance of those Things, thou shalt be a good Minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the Words of Faith, and of good Doctrine.*

1 Tim. iv. 6. In the sixth Chapter he goes on to instruct him what to teach the People. *Let as many Servants, says he, as are under the Yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all Honour, that the Name of God, and his Doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have Believing Masters, let them not despise them, because they are Brethren; but rather do them Service, because they are Faithful and Beloved, Partakers of the Benefit. These Things teach and exhort.* He adds, v. 17, 18, 19. *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all Things to enjoy: That they do good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life.* These he calls whole-
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some Words, and a Doctrine which is according to Godliness. ver. 3.

○ In his Second Epistle, Chap. 2. he takes notice that we obtain Salvation by *Christ Jesus*; and *that if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him, &c.* of these things he bids them put them in Remembrance; charging them, at the same Time, before the Lord, *that they strive not about Words to no Profit, but to the subverting of the Hearers.*

○ In his Epistle to Titus, he enjoyns him to *speak the Things which become sound Doctrine. viz. that the aged Men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in Faith, in Charity, in Patience. That the aged Women likewise be in Behaviour, as becometh Holiness; not false Accusers, not given to much Wine, Teachers of good Things; with much more of the same Nature. Chap. 2.* And he tells him, that this is the Way to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour. ver. 10. and that the promoting of the Love and Practice of these Things is a main Design of Christianity. ver. 11, 12. *These Things he was to speak and exhort; and to censure with Authority those that did not live according to them. ver. 15.*

In the third Chapter, he bids him *put them in Mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good Work, to speak Evil of*

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no Man, to be no Brawlers, but gentle, shewing all Meekness unto all Men. Then, he puts him in Mind of a powerful Motive to the Practice of these Duties ; and adds in the 8th verse, *This is a faithful Saying, and these Things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they, which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works. These Things are good and profitable unto Men.*

After this manner were *Timothy* and *Titus* ordered, by the Apostle *Paul*, to preach the Gospel. Thus they preached *Christ*.

TO CONCLUDE,

We are doubtless obliged, not only to explain the Laws of God, and the Obligations that we are under to keep them ; but also to insist upon the Love of God in *Christ Jesus*, and the great Advantages of the *Christian Religion* : But then you are to consider, that these are so many Motives to obedience, and that they are revealed for this Purpose. They are *Doctrines according to Godliness* ; and teach us, *that denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we should live righteously, soberly and godly.* And we can have no Interest in the Privileges, without observing the Duties of Christianity.

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S E R M O N XI.

Church Privileges a vain Security.

J E R E M. vii. 4.

*Trust ye not in lying Words, saying,
the Temple of the Lord, the Tem-
ple of the Lord, the Temple of the
Lord are these.*

TH E *Israelites* were God's peculiar People; they enjoy'd his Statutes and his Ordinances. He had his Tabernacle amongst them, and dwelt in the midst of their Camps. After some Time, *Solomon* built him an House, and then *his Tabernacle was in Salem, and his Dwelling-Place in Sion; so that he was known in Judah, and his Name was great in Israel.* Psal. lxxvi. 1, 2. But notwithstanding these superior Privileges, they were bent upon backsliding from the true God, the God

of *Israel*, and strongly inclined to devote themselves to the Service of other Gods. Therefore God gave up Ten of their Tribes, known by the Name of *Israel*, into the Hands of their Enemies, who carried them away Captive into strange Lands, and there made a Prey of them. For all this, the two remaining Tribes, who were generally distinguished by the Name of *Judah*, would not be reclaimed. *When for all the Causes, whereby backsliding Israel committed Adultery, God had put her away, and given her a Bill of Divorce ; yet her treacherous Sister Judah feared not ; but went and played the Harlot also. And it came to pass, through the Lightness of her Whoredom, that she defiled the Land, and committed Adultery with Stocks and Stones.* Jer. iii. 8, 9. *They said not, where is the Lord that brought us up out of the Land of Egypt, that led us through the Wilderness, through a Land of Desarts and of Pits, through a Land of Drought and of the Shadow of Death, through a Land that no Man passed through, and where no Man dwelt ? The Priests said not, where is the Lord ? And they that handle the Law, knew him not. The Pastors also transgressed against him, and the Prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after Things that do not profit.* Jerem. ii. 6, 8. For all this, they made their Boast of God, and thought themselves

themselves secure of his Favour. And indeed his Compassion towards them was exceeding great. *Run ye, says he, to and fro through the Streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad Places thereof, if ye can find a Man, if there be any that executeth Judgment, that seeketh the Truth, and I will pardon it.* Jerem. v. 1. The Defection was become universal. *The Prophets prophesied falsely, and the Priests bare Rule by their Means, and the People loved to have it so.* ver. 31. The false Prophets soothed them with flattering Speeches, and healed their Wounds slightly, saying, *Peace, Peace, when there was no Peace.* Chap. vi. ver. 14. And therefore, *though their Wickedness was great, and their Iniquities infinite,* they gloried in their external Privileges, as their great Security, and an evident Proof of God's distinguishing Kindness for them: *Saying the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these.* As much as to say, we are the true Church of God, and worship him in his Holy Temple; there we offer up our Sacrifices according to his own Appointment, *and the Law of the Lord is with us.* But the Prophet was ordered to let them know that these were vain Words. *Behold, says he, ye trust in lying Words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murther, and commit Adultery, and*

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swear falsely, and burnt Incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this House which is called by my Name, and say, we are delivered to do all those Abominations. ver. 9, 10. They seemed to think, that their Attendance on the true Worship of God, and their frequent Washings and Sacrifices would atone for all their Wickedness; and that they had no Reason to apprehend that God would pursue them with his Judgments.

We may observe,

I. That a Church constituted according to God's Appointment, and exalted to Heaven for Privileges, may be given up to all Manner of Wickedness.

II. It is no new Thing for corrupt Churches to lay great Stress upon external Privileges.

When I have finished this Observation, I will enquire,

III. Into the Causes of this fatal Mistake.

And observe,

IV. That it is the greatest Folly for wicked Men, to rely upon Church Privileges, and promise themselves Peace and Safety from them.

I. A

I. *A Church constituted according to God's Appointment, and exalted to Heaven for Privileges, may be given up to all Manner of Wickedness.*

The Jewish Church is the most notorious Instance of the Truth of this Observation. They were a chosen Generation, a peculiar People. *Israel was God's Son, even his First-born; and he planted him a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed.* He called up Moses his Servant into the Mount, and delivered to him his Laws, his Statutes and his Judgments, which he was ordered to communicate to them, for their Approbation and Consent; and he entered into Covenant with them, and became their God. Then he appointed an Ark and Tabernacle to be prepared, where he fixed his own Residence, and where the People were obliged to appear before him, and worship him. As to the Form and Method of worshipping him, he was very full and particular in giving Directions concerning it. He even condescended to take Notice of the minutest Circumstances, and appointed the Order of *Priests* that were to serve him at his Altar, establishing their Succession in *Aaron's* Family, and giving plain and express Rules concerning the Manner of their Consecration. He dwelt amongst them, that they might consult him upon extraordinary Oc-

casions ; and the Heavenly Fire burnt continually upon the Altar, in Token of his accepting their Offerings, and the Sacrifices. When, by Reason of the exceeding Wickedness of the People, he departed out of the Sanctuary, and would dwell no longer amongst them he did not leave them to stay without a Guide, nor without special Tokens of his peculiar Care and Concern for their Happiness. *Jerem. vii. 25.* Since the Day that your Fathers came forth out of the Land of Egypt, unto this Day, I have even sent unto you all my Servants the Prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them. Thus shewed he his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments unto Israel. He dealt not so with any Nation. *Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.* And yet, no People so corrupt, or so perversely bent as Judah. This is set forth in the strongest Colours, in the following Words. *Jer. ii. 10,—13.* Pass over the Isles of Chittim, and see, and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which are yet no Gods ? But my People have changed their Glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my People have committed two Evils. They have forsaken me the Fountain of living Waters,

Waters, and hewed them out Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water.

Israel is the greatest, yet not the only Instance of the Abuse, and Misimprovement of spiritual Privileges. There are many Christian Churches, that have great and singular Advantages, being blessed, not only with the Light of Revelation, but with Pastors apt to teach, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work. And yet Iniquity abounds amongst them, and no Man repenteth him of his Wickedness, saying what have I done? every one turneth to his Course, as the Horse rusheth into Battle. Shall not God visit for these things? And shall not his Soul be avenged on such a People as this?

II. *'Tis no new thing for corrupt Churches to lay great stress upon external Privileges. It is scarce possible for any Church to be more notoriously wicked than the Jews were before their Captivity; yet you see, with what Confidence they made their Boast of the Temple of God that was among them. They glory'd in it, as their great Security; and thought themselves the happiest People upon Earth. Their Prophets and their Priests had betrayed them with false Colourings, promising them Peace and Safety on the Account of their extraordinary Privileges, and Zeal for the House of God. They were so lifted up, with these false Representations of their happy State and Condition*

dition above all the People of the Earth, that they were not at all ashamed of their Wick- edness, boasting still, that they were the Church of God. *Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.* Jerem. vi. 15. Tho' they had lost all Sense of Sin and Shame; yet, how do they fill their Mouths with those vain and deceitful Words, *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these!*

Tho' after their Return from Captivity they were generally averse to Idolatry, and remain so to this Time; yet they were become very corrupt in our Saviour's Days. The *Pharisees*, the prevailing Sect amongst them, had made void the Law by their Traditions. All their Religion was Hypocrisy, and they laid great Stress upon Trifles, whilst they neglected the most important Parts of their Law. This we learn from the following Words. *Matt. xxiii. 23. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye pay Tithe of Mint, and Anise, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith.* Notwithstanding that this was a just and heavy Charge against them, they glory'd greatly in their Privileges, making their Boast of God, of the Law, and of Circumcision; and valued themselves highly
above

above the *Gentiles*, calling them *Dogs*, and treating them with the utmost Disdain, as a People abandon'd of God, and devoted to Destruction.

This Conduct of the *Jews* may abate our Surprise, when we hear the most profligate Wretches making their Boast of the Church whereof they profess themselves Members. There are too many People, of all Professions and Denominations, that are apt to value themselves very much, on the Account of some peculiar Characteristick or other, belonging to the Church they would be thought to adhere to; whilst, at the same time, they have no real Regard for Piety and Virtue, but are as vicious in their Conversations as any other People. They lay great Stress upon some *distinguishing Tenet* of their *Party*, slighting those of different Sentiments, tho' every Way valuable in other Respects; when perhaps, the only thing that recommends them to any one's Regard, is their *Zeal* for their boasted *Shibboleth*. Whilst they make a loud Noise about the Purity of their Worship, or Soundness of their Doctrine, and seem to promise themselves great things from them; they are either addicted to Swearing, Drunkenness, or some other fashionable Vice. Nothing more common than this; this is Matter of daily Observation, and deserves to be lamented.

It

It may not be amiss to enquire,
 III. How it comes to pass, that People of
 very bad Morals, make such a boasting
 Noise about external Privileges, or Party
 Notions, and lay so great a Stress upon
 them?

I think, a principal Reason is, *because
 this is a very cheap Religion, and an easy
 Way of getting to Heaven.* A Man may
 be very loud in crying out *the Temple of the
 Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple
 of the Lord are these!* without subduing any
 one of his Lusts. Or he may profess a great
 deal of Zeal for this or the other Form of
 Worship, or this or the other Doctrinal Point,
 and yet not renounce so much as one sinful
 Pleasure. He does not deny himself in any
 one Respect, whilst he makes a Boast of the
Church, or Orthodoxy, and values himself
 above other People that are not in his
 Scheme of Thinking, or rather Talking.
 Nay, he indulges his Vanity and Contempt
 of Men that are much wiser and better than
 himself, whilst he confines the Favour of
 God to those of his Sentiments or Party;
 and is caress'd and applauded as a *good
 Churchman* and a *zealous Friend to Truth.*

Another Reason, I am apt to think, is
its being thought to atone for all their Sins.
 I believe these were the Apprehensions of
 the *Jews* in *Jeremiah's* Time. They seem
 to have thought that God would not punish
 his

his People for any of their Faults, as long as they continued to offer up their Sacrifices and Devotions at his Temple; and therefore, tho' they were extremely wicked, and had cast off the Fear of God, they did not neglect to worship him at his Temple. *Tho' they burnt Incense to Baal, and walked after other Gods whom they knew not, they went and stood before the Lord, in his House which was called by his Name.*

These two Observations make way for the following Remark, viz. That Men are apt to be very *devotional* in those Parts of God's Worship and Service, which cost the Flesh but little, and which they imagine will atone for all their past Offences. As for Instance; The *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* is generally thought to be of the most healing Virtue and Efficacy, and Men of very corrupt Lives think, that the receiving of it will blot out all old Scores, and cancel all past Obligations to eternal Punishment: and therefore, we see every Day, that they will attend upon this *sacred Rite*, with as great an Appearance of Seriousness and Devotion, as Men of the most circumspect and religious Conversations. 'Tis no Act of Self-denial to receive the *Sacrament*. Men can receive it, and yet carry back the same Lusts which they brought with them to the *Lord's-Table*. And therefore imagining, that such a cheap and easy Service will en-
title

title them to God's Pardoning Mercy and Grace, they put on an Air of extraordinary Sanctity whilst they are ingag'd in it; but soon discover, that they never intended to be thereby brought under any Obligation to renounce their Sins, by persisting in the same Method of Vice they have always been accustomed to.

Another Reason, which I have just hinted before, is, *the Pride that Men have in setting themselves above their Neighbours and in looking down upon them with Scorn and Contempt.* These are zealous for *Party Notions*, and lay a mighty stress upon *distinguishing Tenets*, as if the whole of Religion center'd in them, and entirely depended on them; because this gives them an Air of superior Sanctity, and represents all that are of a different Opinion, as Persons that are hated of God, and to be abhorred of Men.

The *Jews*, who laid great Stress upon their Ceremonies, and other Externals of their Religion, took great Pride in contemning all that were not of their Profession, tho' they were more wicked than any of their Neighbours. We have the following Description of them. *Is. lxxv. 3, 4, 5. They are a People that provoketh me to Anger continually to my Face, that sacrificeth in Gardens, and burneth Incense upon Altars of Brick; which remain among the Graves,*
and

and lodge in the Monuments, — which say, stand by thy self, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou. The Pharisees, in our Saviour's Time, laid great Stress upon their Traditions and Ceremonies; and none were more haughty, or took more Pride in condemning others as unholy, than they. How often did they find fault with our *blessed Lord* for conversing with *Publicans* and *Sinners*? and how superstitious were they in washing their Hands, whenever they had been at any publick Assembly, where they conversed with mixed Company, as if the very Touch of a Stranger defiled them? *Mark vii. 4. When they came from the Market, except they wash they eat not.* How did the *superstitious Pharisee*, *Luke xviii. 11.* exalt himself, and arrogantly condemn the *poor penitent Publican*?

But I think, lastly, that all the Blame of such unreasonable Stress upon the *extra-essentials* of Religion, whilst little or no Regard is shewn for the *Essential*, and more important Parts thereof, ought not to be laid upon the People. I am afraid, *Ministers* are too apt to inflame the Passions, and raise the Imaginations of their Hearers, by a more than ordinary Zeal in the Defence of Notions, and Customs peculiar to those of their particular Denomination. By such Methods, they take off the People from that just Regard which they ought to pay to True Religion

Religion and Virtue, and influence them to lay the chief Stress of their Salvation, upon a weak and deceitful Foundation. This was the Practice, both of the *Prophets*, and *Priests* amongst the *Jews*, in *Jeremiah's* Time. They taught the People *lying Words*, and they put their Trust in them, *saying the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these*; when, at the same time, they were guilty of the greatest Abominations. This has been too much the Practice of *Christian Ministers*, and has had the same fatal Influence upon their Hearers, that it had upon the *Jews* of old. It has often inflamed them with a Zeal for God, that has neither been according to Knowledge, nor accompanied with true Religion. I wish that *Ministers* would be careful to teach those that hear them, not to lay greater Stress upon any thing that they recommend to them, as the Matter of their Belief or Practice, than it will really bear. This would be a Means of preventing a great many fatal Mistakes, and would lay a just Restraint upon a furious and unchristian Zeal.

I proceed to the last Proposition.

IV. *'Tis the greatest Folly for wicked Men to rely upon Church Privileges, and to promise themselves Peace and Safety from them.* We cannot have a more affecting, and convincing Instance of the Truth of this Observation,

Observation, than in the Case of *Israel and Judah*. *The Lord's Portion was his People, Jacob was the Lot of his Inheritance; he instructed him, he kept him as the Apple of his Eye.* Deut. xxxii. 9, 10. His Sanctuary was in the midst of them, where he dwelt upon the *Mercy-Seat*. He brought them into the Land of *Canaan*, the Glory of all Lands, and took up his Residence at *Shiloh*. There the Tabernacle, and Ark of God's Presence, had a settled Habitation for some time. There the *God of Israel* dwelt in a visible Manner, between the *Cherubims*, in the *most Holy Place*; and there the several Tribes presented themselves before him, and worshipped towards his Sanctuary. They had God's Statutes and Ordinances written, some of them by the Finger of *God*, and the rest by the Hand of *Moses* under the Divine Influence and Direction; which were the Rule of Worship, and of all the Obedience which God required of them. And they had *Prophets* divinely inspired, to instruct them, and to encourage them in their Obedience, with repeated Promises of signal Blessings; and to denounce Wrath against them, in Case of obstinate and repeated Disobedience. They were a People holy unto the Lord, separated from all the Nations of the Earth; *a Royal Priesthood, a peculiar People*: And yet their distinguishing Privileges were no Security to

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them,

them, when once they became incorrigible in their Wickedness. *Shiloh* could not protect them: The Ark of God was no longer a Defence unto them: The *Glory* departed from *Israel*. The Ark of God was given up into the Enemy's Hands, and suffer'd to be carried away captive; and the Sword had a Commission to slay, and not to spare. The *Psalmist* gives us the following beautiful Description of this Matter. *They tempted and provoked the most High God, and kept not his Testimonies — When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; so that he forsook the Tabernacle of Shiloh, the Tent which he had placed among Men, and delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies Hand. He gave his People over also to the Sword, and was wroth for his Inheritance. The Fire consumed their young Men, and their Maidens were not given to Marriage. Their Priests fell by the Sword, and their Widows made no Lamentation.* Ps. lxxviii. 56—64. This is a remarkable Instance of God's Displeasure against Sin, and a sufficient Warning not to put Trust in Spiritual Mercies and Privileges, or external Professions of Religion, whilst we remain Enemies to God, and disobedient to his Laws. And therefore when the *Prophet* reproves the Folly of *Judah*, in trusting in lying Words, he adds, in the Name

Name of the Lord; go ye now unto my Place which was in Shiloh, where I set my Name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the Wickedness of my People Israel. Jer. vii. 12.

Jerusalem was the chief Place which God made choice of to put his Name there, and *Sion*, a principal Part thereof, was called, by way of Eminency, *the Mountain of his Holiness*. Ps. xlviii. 1. *The Lord loved the Gates of Sion more, than all the Dwellings of Jacob; glorious things were spoken of this City of God.* Ps. lxxxvii. 2, 3. *Israel* often looked for Salvation out of *Sion*, and out of *Sion*, *the Perfection of Beauty*, God often shined. Ps. l. 2. He had his Temple upon Mount *Moriah*, which was either a Part, or in the Confines of *Sion*. He made choice of this for the Place of Worship in *David's* Time, not only by expresse Order, but by a signal Token of his special Presence there. 1 Chron. xxi. 18, 26. *The Angel of the Lord* commanded *Gad* to say to *David*, that *David* should go up, and set an Altar unto the Lord, in the *Threshing-Floor of Ornan* [i. e. upon Mount *Moriah*]. And *David* built there an Altar unto the Lord, and offered Burnt-Offerings, and Peace-Offerings, and called upon the Lord, and he answered him from Heaven by Fire upon the Altar of Burnt-Offering. *David* was hereby fully con-

vinced that this was the Place where God would record his Name. *Then said he, this is the House of the Lord God, and this is the Altar of the Burnt-Offering for Israel.*

1 Chron. xxii. 1. *David* in his Time made great Preparations for Building the House of the Lord, which was to be *exceeding Magnificent, of Fame, and of Glory throughout all Countries*; but the Honour of building it was reserved for *King Solomon*. Accordingly, after his Father *David's* Decease, he sat heartily about the Work, and laid the Foundation thereof in Mount *Moriah*, the Place which God had chosen; and where *David*, by exprefs Orders from God, had erected an Altar of Burnt-Offering. 2 Chr. iii. 1. *Then Solomon began to build the House of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his Father, in the Place that David had prepared in the Threshing Floor of Ornan the Jebusite.* After he had finished the House, he gave Orders to bring up the *Ark of the Covenant of the Lord*, out of the *City of David, which is Zion*; and the Priests brought it into his Place, to the *Oracle of the House*, into the *most holy Place*, even under the Wings of the *Cherubims*. And when they were come out of the *Holy Place*, a Cloud filled the House of the Lord, as a Testimony of God's Presence there. 1 Kings viii. 2 Chron. v.

After this, *Solomon* prayed before the Altar of the Lord, and he and all *Israel* offered Sacrifice upon it; and then God gave another signal Token of his Presence in his House, by shewing how acceptable the Sacrifices were that were offered up in that Place, and by the breaking forth of the *Glory of the Lord* out of the Cloud, which had filled the House. We have this Matter represented in the following Words. *2 Chron. vii. 1. Now when Solomon had made an end of Praying, the Fire came down from Heaven, and consumed the Burnt-Offering, and the Sacrifices, and the Glory of the Lord filled the House.*

Thus you see, *Jerusalem* was *God's City*; *Sion* the Mountain of his Holiness; and the Temple, the Place of his special Presence and Residence. If any might have promised themselves Safety and Protection in the Ways of Sin, on the Account of great and eminent Privileges, *Israel* might, as indeed they did, but were miserably disappointed. God suffered his *City Jerusalem* to be laid waste, the Temple to be level'd with the Ground, and his People to be carried into Captivity. And tho' after some Years, he brought back the Captivity of *Judah*, and encouraged the rebuilding of the Temple; yet because they crucified their *Messiah*, who was sent to save them, and wilfully closed their Eyes, and hardened their Hearts, lest they

should see with their Eyes, and understand with their Hearts, and should be converted, and he should heal them; he suffered his City and Temple to be once more laid waste, and brought unspeakable Desolation upon the whole Land of *Israel*. Sin at last issued in their total Ruin. They had no Plea that could save them from Destruction. *Jerusalem* was God's City; *Mount Sion* the Place which he had loved, and wherein he had dwelt; the Temple was the Throne of his Glory; and *Israel* was his Inheritance, and called by his Name. They were the natural Branches of a good Olive Tree; but for all this, God resolved that he would cast them off, and punish them for all their Iniquity; and they have born the Tokens of his severe Displeasure for a great many Years; and the Gentiles, that were not a People, and that had not obtained Mercy, are taken into Covenant, and have had peculiar Favours conferr'd upon them. But if God spared not the natural Branches, when, by their repeated Rebellions and obstinate Unbelief, they had provoked him to Wrath; can we hope that he will spare us, or have any more Mercy upon us, than he had upon the *Jews*, notwithstanding our Profession of *Christianity*, if we live in Disobedience to the known Laws of our Religion, and persist in dishonouring and offending God by wilful Impiety? The History of God's Conduct

Conduct towards his antient People the *Jews* is a sufficient Warning to us, not to put Trust either in external Professions, or publick Tokens of the Divine Favour and Compassion, if we are not thereby led to Repentance. *All these things happened unto them for Examples; and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come.* 1 Cor. x. 11. If Sin brought Ruin upon a whole Nation, tho' for a great many Years, the only People in the World that had so much as the Form of Godliness; what Safety or Protection can particular Persons expect, on the Account of their profess'd Attachment to the purest Church upon Earth, if they do not live conformably to the Rules of their Profession? If God would not hear the Cries of his People for Mercy, nor so much as suffer his *Prophets* to intercede for them, but visited all their Sins with the most exemplary Vengeance; he will certainly severely punish professing *Christians*, that refuse to be subject to his Laws, and are not to be reclaimed by all the Mercy and Grace of that Gospel which they profess to believe. The Scripture History of the *Jews* teaches us this Lesson.

Besides this, both *Reason* and the *Gospel* may fully convince us, that we cannot escape Divine Indignation, notwithstanding that we are profess'd Members of the visible

Church of Christ, and enjoy many singular Privileges by virtue of our Profession; if instead of sincerely endeavouring to conform our selves to all the Requirements of the Gospel, we live in the daily Neglect of them, and will not be brought in Subjection to them.

To profess to believe in God, and to pay him the outward Homage of our Lips, and to acknowledge that the *Lord Jesus Christ* is the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, and that all the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity are divinely inspired; when at the same time, we indulge our selves in continued wilful Immoralities, and in the stated Abuse of the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel, cannot certainly be true Religion, cannot possibly recommend us to Divine Favour and Acceptance; but must needs render us obnoxious to his severest Displeasure. These are only the flattering Speeches of a determined Enemy; vain and hypocritical Professions; and will rise up in Judgment to condemn those unhappy Souls that rely on them, even whilst they live in direct Contradiction to them. The Judge may say, out of your own Mouths will I condemn you. You acknowledg'd me to be God, own'd the Reasonableness of my Service, and that Obedience did of Right belong to me; and yet you cast off all

all Regard for my Authority, and would not be obedient to my Laws.

Gospel Light and Grace, if abused, and trampled under Foot, can be no Security to us. The Abuse of so much Mercy will greatly aggravate our Guilt, and bring upon us certain and inevitable Destruction. The greater that our Mercies are, the more inexcusable we, if we do not improve them. If we are not prevailed upon to repent, by the kind and merciful Declarations of the Gospel, we shall perish at last, without Remedy, and without Mercy: Reason it self teaches us thus much.

As to the Gospel, it gives us not the least Encouragement to hope for Salvation, either on the Account of superior Privileges, or an outward Profession of Christianity. On the contrary, *the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, teaches us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World.* Tit. ii. 12, 13. All

that *name the Name of Christ*, that make Profession of his Religion, are commanded to *depart from Iniquity.* 2 Tim. ii. 19.

We are obliged to *mortify our Members that are upon the Earth.* Col. iii. 5. *For if we live after the Flesh, we shall die; but if thro' the Spirit we mortify the Deeds of the Body, we shall live.* Rom. viii. 13.

We are assured *that the unrighteous shall*
not

not inherit the Kingdom of God. 1 Cor. vi. 9. And that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* Heb. xii. 14. And our Lord himself, who best knows the Terms of the Christian Salvation, makes the following express Declaration. *Mat. vii. 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* These Texts of Scripture are so many plain and convincing Proofs, that professed Christians ought to despair of reaping any Advantage by their Religion or Profession, as long as they live in Disobedience to the known Laws of the Gospel, and will not be prevail'd with to repent, and forsake their Sins.

The Religion of the *Jews* consisted very much in external Service, in a great Variety of Sacrifices, and repeated Washings; and therefore they were prone to think, tho' without any just Ground, that the careful Observance of these things, aton'd for their daily Sins, and recommended them to God, as Persons religiously disposed. But the great thing that *Christianity* aims at, and most expressly inculcates, as the Condition of our Acceptance with God, is Purity of Heart, expressed in a religious Conversation. This is manifest in every Page of the Gospel, and cannot be mistaken by any,

excepting such as are blinded with their Lusts, and wilfully shut their Eyes against the Reception of so ungrateful a Truth. We must have a new Gospel directly opposite to the Nature, both of God and Man, before we can be received to Favour upon any other Terms. But let us not expect any other Revelation, any other Gospel that will be more favourable to our Lusts; for if we will not submit to the Gospel of the *Lord Jesus*, and will not embrace the present Dispensation of Grace and Mercy, *there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* Heb. x. 27.

TO CONCLUDE.

Let us all endeavour after the Life and Power of Religion. We have a plain Rule before us; he that runs may read. Let us carefully consult our Bibles, and *hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.* The Flesh will be satisfied with empty Titles, and a formal Profession; and we shall be strongly inclined to lay great stress upon them; but let us not be deceived, God will not be mocked. We must give him our Hearts, and worship him in Spirit and in Truth, otherwise it will be in vain for us to expect his Favour, and to hope that
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we shall be able to *stand in the Judgment, and in the Congregation of the righteous. We must cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God; for no unclean Person hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God.* Eph. v. 5.

S E R

SERMON XII.

Enoch's Faith.

H E B. xi. 5, 6.

Enoch — had this Testimony, that he pleased God. But without Faith it is impossible to please him; for he, that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

FAITH in the strict and proper Acceptation signifies believing the Promises and Declarations of Almighty God. 'Tis thus described by the Apostle to the *Hebr.* xi. 1. *Faith is the Substance of things hoped for, i. e. a firm Persuasion of the Truth of Divine Promises; and the Evidence of things not seen; i. e. a firm Belief of Divine Revelation.* The Apostle
goes

goes on to illustrate his Description of Faith in several Instances, shewing the extraordinary Power and Influence thereof in the Conduct of Life, when built on the Promises of God. Faith is sometimes taken in a more general Sense, and signifies a firm Assent to the Discoveries of Reason. It may be taken in this Sense, in one Part of the Text: *He, that cometh unto God, must believe that he is*; must believe that there is a God upon the Report and Evidence of Reason. In the last Words of the Text, it may be understood to be an Assent to the Discoveries both of Reason and Revelation. We must believe *that God is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. This great and important Truth is, partly discover'd to us by the Light of our own Reason, and fully confirmed to us by the much clearer Light of Divine Revelation.

The Impossibility, here spoken of, is an Impossibility in the Nature of the Thing; and not on the Account of some express Revelation from Heaven, appointing these the Terms of our Acceptance with God.

By *coming unto God* is meant, Worshiping him by Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving.

By *believing that God is* is principally meant, believing his Existence; believing that there is a God; *i. e.* a self-existent, independent, and absolutely perfect Being.

By

By *diligently seeking him*, is meant, seeking his Favour by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving; and by every other Act of Obedience, with the utmost Sincerity, and with unwearied Application. *Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you, and ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your Heart.* Jerem.

XXIX. 12, 13.

By *believing that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him* is meant, that we must believe that God will be merciful and gracious to all penitent returning Sinners, and that he will even crown them with Loving-kindness, and with tender Mercies.

Having thus briefly explain'd the several Parts of the Text, I would observe,

That we have here a clear Account of the Faith which render'd the Worshippers of God acceptable to him before the Flood. *Enoch had this Testimony, that he pleased God, but without Faith 'tis impossible to please him.* The Words following give us an Account of his Faith, which render'd his religious Services so pleasing unto God, and for which he was translated into Heaven, for God took him. *He believed that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

I might raise several Observations from the Words; but designing the preceding Observation

Observation for the Foundation of the ensuing Discourse, I shall not so much as mention them.

This Account of *Enoch's* Faith, and of the Acceptableness of the Services that were built upon it, and influenced by it, gives me Occasion to enquire,

1. Whether any thing more was necessary to be believed before the Flood?

2. Whether any thing more was necessary to be believed by the *Jews* before the Coming of Christ?

3. What more is necessary to be believed since his coming?

1. Was any thing necessary to be believed before the Flood, besides these two *fundamental Articles* of natural, as well as revealed Religion, *that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him?*

I'll dispatch this Enquiry in a few Words, because I intend a more full and complete Answer to it, in what I have to offer in Answer to the second Enquiry.

It is plain that no Articles were necessary to be believed excepting these two, because these are the only Articles that are mentioned in *Enoch's* Case; and we see that the Belief of them recommended him to the Divine Acceptance; and that his extraordinary Piety procured for him as extraordinary a Reward.

2. Was

2. Was any thing more necessary to be believed by the *Jews* before the coming of Christ?

I do not enquire whether the *Jews* were obliged to believe whatever *Moses* and the *Prophets* made known to them, when they were convinced that they had a Commission from God, and were divinely inspired; nothing being more manifest, than that they were obliged to believe the Testimony of God, when fully made known to them.

My Enquiry is, were there any other Articles that were peremptorily insisted on to be explicitly believed, as a necessary Condition of Acceptance? They were certainly obliged to believe the Divine Veracity, in every thing that was revealed to them from Heaven. But were there any other particular Doctrines, that were expressly to be assented to in the full Sense of the Revealer, upon Pain of the Divine Displeasure for ever?

I answer No. And I think the Acceptableness of *Enoch's* Faith will justify the Assertion; unless it can be shewn in any Part of the *Old Testament*, that any thing more was made a necessary Article of saving Faith.

It will be said, did not the *Old Testament* Saints believe in *Jesus Christ*? was it not impossible for them to be saved, without believing in him?

1. If by believing in him in the Enquiry, be meant believing that *Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth* is the true *Messiah*; 'tis plain that this was so far from being necessary, that it was impossible to believe it, there being no such Person in being, in the Times to which this Enquiry is confined.

2. If by believing in Christ be meant relying upon his Sufferings, and Intercession for Pardon, and Acceptance with God. I answer; whether some of the *Old Testament* Saints might not think that something more was necessary to recommend them to the Favour of God, besides the Faith mentioned in the Text, accompanied with true Repentance and Amendment of Life, I shall not determine. But this is certain; that in those Days, a Man might be a sincere Servant of God, and in a justified State, without having any Belief in, or knowledge of the Death and Intercession of a crucified Saviour. This I say is certain; for surely it will be owned, that the *Disciples* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, were truly regenerated, and in a State of Favour with God, before his Resurrection; and yet they were so far from believing that Christ was to die for them, tho' they believed him to be the *Messiah*, that they believed quite the contrary; they believed that he was to have been their Ruler and Deliverer from the Power and Authority of the

the Romans. They trusted that it was he that should have redeemed Israel. When he spake to them of his Death, 'tis said, that they understood none of these things, and that this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. Luke xviii.

34. Peter, in particular, upon our Lord's telling his Disciples, that he must suffer many things at Jerusalem, of the Elders and Chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third Day, took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Far be it from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.

Mat. xvi. 21, 22. The Disciples were so far from believing any thing concerning the Suffering and Death of Christ, even after he had made so full a Declaration, that thinking nothing but of a temporal Kingdom, and a temporal Deliverer, they reasoned among themselves, which of them should be greatest; greatest in the temporal Kingdom of the Messiah. Luke ix. 46.

Now I observe, that if the Disciples of our Lord, who were under a much clearer Dispensation, and had much greater Advantages than the Jews of old, did not, even after he had expressly told them that he must suffer at Jerusalem, believe any thing of it; and if notwithstanding this, they were in a State of Favour with God, in a justified and pardoned State; the Jews who lived before them, must generally have been

ignorant of any such thing, and yet their Ignorance of so important a Truth, must have been no Bar to their Salvation.

I may observe farther, that if this was no necessary Article of Faith, it could not be necessary for them to believe, that their *Messiah* was to rise from the dead. If they did not believe that he was to die, they could not have so much as a Thought about his Resurrection, and yet they might be saved. It is well known, that our Lord told his *Disciples*, whilst he was yet alive, not only that he was to die, but that he should rise again on the third Day; and yet, tho' he was slain at *Jerusalem*, as he had foretold, and Tidings were brought them after his Resurrection, that he was actually risen from the Dead, they believed it not. When the Women who had been at the Sepulchre, and had found that the Body was gone, and were assured by the *Angels* that he was risen from the Dead, returned, and told the *Apostles* what they had seen and heard, it is said, *that their Words seemed to them as idle Tales, and they believed them not.* It is said particularly of *Thomas*, one of the Twelve, that when the *Disciples* told him that they had seen the Lord, he said unto them, *Except I shall see in his Hands the print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Print of the Nails, and thrust my Hand into his Side,*

I will not believe. John xx. 25, 26. It is said expressly, ver. 9. *that as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the Dead.*

If the *Disciples* were so backward to believe the Resurrection of *Christ*; we may well suppose, that such a thing scarce entered into the Thoughts of any of the *Jews* of old: tho' both the Death of *Christ*, and his Ascension into Glory, were foretold by the *Prophets*. *Christ* saith to the two Men, who were going to *Emmaus* after his Resurrection, *and were in doubt, not knowing what to believe, O Fools, and slow of Heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 27.

The *Jews* were to blame, as well as the *Disciples* of our Lord, that they understood no more of the Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament concerning *Christ*. But yet 'tis evident from the Case of the *Disciples*, who understood little of these things, tho' they had not only the Benefit of these Types and Prophecies, but express Intimations from *Christ* himself, concerning his Death and Resurrection, that the Belief of these things, was not a necessary Condition of Salvation.

As a farther Confirmation that Faith in a crucified Saviour, was no necessary Part of the Belief of the Jews, it may not be amiss to consider the Scripture Account of the Faith of their *Father Abraham*, which was imputed to him for Righteousness.

We are told, that by Faith *Abraham*, when he was called to go out into a Place which he should after receive for an Inheritance, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. By Faith he sojourned in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the Heirs with him of the same Promise. For he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Heb. xi. 8, 9, 10. We are also told, that he believed God, when he promised him a numerous Posterity, tho' there were many Difficulties in the way of fulfilling the Promise, to try his Faith. Lam. iv. 18—22. *Who against Hope believed in Hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations; according to that which was spoken, so shall thy Seed be. And being not weak in Faith, he considered not his own Body now dead, when he was about an hundred Years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's Womb. He stagger'd not at the Promise of God through Unbelief; but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God: And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able*

able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for Righteousness. And Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19. By Faith Abraham, when he was tryed, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the Promises, offered up his only begotten Son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy Seed be called. Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the Dead.

You see, that the Death and Satisfaction of a crucified Christ was no Part of the Object of Abraham's justifying Faith.

It is farther observable, that in the famous Catalogue of Believers, mentioned Heb. xi. there is not the least Intimation, that their Faith had any Relation to the Death of the Messiah.

The peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel were but darkly revealed, till Christ appeared himself upon the Earth. The Promises that were made to Adam, Abraham, &c. it must be own'd, were obscure. The Prophets, indeed, spoke more plainly, but were not understood, till the Events explain'd their Meaning. The Gospel, at the first, began to be clearly revealed by Christ, and was afterwards more fully explained and confirmed by them that heard him. Heb. ii. 3.

Upon the whole, I think 'tis plain, that Faith in a crucified Saviour was not necessa-

ry to Pardon and Life, 'till after our Lord's Resurrection.

And hence I would observe, that those Words of our Saviour, *John vi. 53. except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you*, must be understood in the comparative and not in the positive Sense. The Meaning seems to be this: They, who do not believe the Doctrine concerning my Death and Sufferings, have no Life in them, in Comparison of that Life, which Faith in me, as shedding my Blood for the World, would inspire them with. If they must be taken in the positive Sense, and if their Meaning must be, that they who have no Faith in the Blood of Christ, have no spiritual Life at all, it will follow; that the *Apostles of our Lord and Saviour*, were in an unsanctified and unpardoned State, 'till after his Resurrection; which surely no Body will take upon him to assert.

There are many Passages in *Scripture*, that are express'd in positive Terms, and yet are to be understood in the comparative Sense only. I will give an Instance, which I think, is unexceptionable, and may help to confirm the Interpretation, which I have given of the forementioned Text. *Mat. xi. 27. No Man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any Man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* Now certainly, the *Disciples* had

had some knowlege of the Son, in Regard they believed him to be the Messiah; and surely God the Father was known to more than Christ. But the knowlege which Men had of the Father and of the Son, was but little, in Comparison of the knowlege which they have of each other; or of that knowlege, wherewith the Gospel has since, so abundantly enlightened the World.

It has been generally said, that the *Jews*, before the Birth of Christ, were obliged to believe in a Saviour to come; that this was a necessary Condition of Justification, and final Salvation.

There is no doubt, but the *Jews* generally believed the Promise of a *Messiah*. He was *the Hope of Israel*. But then, the Notions that they entertained of him were exceeding erroneous; and what special saving Influence, such a Faith could have in recommending them to God, any more than their believing the Divine Veracity in any other of his Promises, I do not apprehend.

It may be questioned whether they were obliged explicitly to believe the Promise of a Saviour, in Regard there was a Promise of Christ made to *Adam*; and yet, 'tis said, that *Enoch* was accepted, upon *believing that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*.

Besides, how does it appear, that the Posterity of Abraham, &c. were more obliged

obliged to believe with an explicit Faith, the Promise of the *Messiah*, than that other Promise, which so often accompanied it, of multiplying *Abraham's Seed*? Surely, this was no necessary Article of Faith, explicitly to be believed by every one that was to be saved; and what is there in the Text, to incline us to believe, that the other was more fit than this?

I conclude from the preceding Observations, that there is Hope for the poor *Heathens*, to whom Christ has not been revealed, that they may be saved, though they do not believe in him. Were the *Jews* of old, who had Types and Shadows, to lead them to the Knowledge of Christ crucified, pardoned and saved, upon their Repentance, without Faith in him? and shall not a penitent and virtuous *Heathen* be saved, because he believes not in Christ, of whom he has never heard a Tittle? Were the *Disciples* of the *Lord Jesus Christ* justified, and consequently in a State of Salvation, though they did not believe in a crucified Saviour, nor had any Notion of his dying for their Sins; and shall the poor *Heathens*, who, so far from having the Privilege of seeing Christ in the Flesh, and conversing with him, have not so much as heard of him; shall they, I say, perish everlastingly, though they should repent, and bring

bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance, because they do not believe in Christ?

I would gladly enlarge your Charity, by enlarging your Views of the Goodness, and tender Compassion of the *Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort*. How often have I heard men, in the Rashness of their Zeal, argue that there is no Possibility of the Salvation of the *Heathen*, unless God should some way or other reveal Christ to them, that they might believe in him. And my Text, amongst others, has been mentioned to support their Uncharitableness. They think, they cannot be sincerely virtuous without Faith in Christ; that Virtue cannot proceed from any other Root; and that if it could, it would not be accepted of God, nor rewarded by him, without Faith in Christ, though it is not possible for the *Heathens* to believe in him, as being never made known to them by any Revelation.

Certainly, such of the Heathen, as come unto God, believing that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, shall one Day or other, have this Testimony, that they pleased God. For of a Truth, God is no Respector of Persons; but in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him. Acts x. 34, 35.

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The Case of *Cornelius*, seems to make it evident, that an *Heathen* may be sincerely pious; and that his Piety is accepted of God, and will be rewarded by him. *Cornelius*, indeed, had renounced the *Heathen Idolatry*, worshipped the true God; but he was neither *Jew* nor *Christian* by Profession, when it was told him by the Angel, that his Prayers and Alms were gone up for a Memorial before God. Acts x. 4.

But if it should be objected that *Cornelius* attended upon the Synagogue Worship, and was acquainted with the Prophetick Writings, and believed in a Messiah to come, though I could offer some Things to take off the Force of this Exception, I rather choose to mention another Case that, I think, is unexceptionable.

The *Ninevites* are a plain Instance that an *Heathen*, without any Knowledge of Christ, may be a true Penitent, and bring forth acceptable Fruits of Righteousness, which God, in great Mercy, will not suffer to go unrewarded. Every Body knows that they were *Gentiles*, and it does not appear that the Prophet preached *Judaism* to them; he cried and said, yet forty Days, and *Nineveh* shall be destroyed. Neither does it appear that they became *Jews* upon his Preaching; it is said, that they believed God, and proclaimed a Fast, &c. They humbled themselves, cried unto God for

for Mercy, and turned every one from their evil Ways, which Behaviour of theirs was rightly acceptable unto God; for it is said he saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Ways, and repented of the Evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not. *Jonah iii.*

I proceed to enquire,

3. What more is necessary to be believed since the coming of Christ? Or whether the Gospel requires any other Articles to be explicitly believed in the Sense of the Revealer?

Certainly it does.

The Gospel enjoyns some Articles to be expressly believed to make us *Christians*, or that we may have the Denomination of *Christians*; without the Belief of which, we can have no Pretence to that honourable Name.

Besides those Articles, which are necessary to be believed by every Man to make him a *Christian*; there are other Points of great Importance, which deserve the most serious, and conscientious Regard of every *Christian*.

I will endeavour to shew,

1. What the Gospel makes necessary to be believed by every Man to make him a *Christian*.

2. What is required of every *Christian*, with Respect to other Points of Faith.

1. What

1. What does the Gospel make necessary to be believed by every Man, to make him a *Christian*?

I answer, that the Faith which particularly denominates a Man a *Christian*, is believing in Christ, or which is the same thing, believing that *Jesus of Nazareth* is the true *Messiah*. * A Man upon believing this, becomes a *Christian*, and is entitled to the Privileges of the Gospel. 1 *John* v. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* Accordingly, such were baptized, even after our Lord's Death, Resurrection and Ascension to Glory. The *Eunuch* was admitted to Baptism, upon his professing his Faith in Christ, in these Words, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* Which is the same Thing, as if he had said, I believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, or the promised *Messiah*; for the *Messiah* was expected under the Character of the Son of God. *When they that watched Jesus saw the Earthquake, and those Things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the Son of God.* i. e. this was the promised *Messiah*. When Christ enquired of his *Disciples*, whom they thought him to be? *Peter* answering, said, *thou art Christ,*

* See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, and the Defences.*

the Son of the living God. Upon this, Christ declared him *blessed*; and told him, *that Flesh and Blood had not revealed it unto him, but his Father which is in Heaven.* And that upon this Rock he would build his Church. Mat. xvi. 16, 17, 18. Philip told Nathaniel, *that they had found him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write, i. e. the Messiah.* Nathaniel goes to him, and believes, *i. e.* believes him to be the *Messiah*, and professeth his Faith in those Words. *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.* John i. 49. The Twelve would not leave our Lord, when many of the Disciples left him, because they believed in him; because they believed that he could teach them the Way to obtain eternal Life, being sure that he was the Christ. Jesus said unto the Twelve, *will ye also go away?* Then Simon Peter answered him, *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life, and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* John vi. 67, 68, 69. This is that Faith in Christ, without which we cannot be saved. *If ye believe not that I am he,* says our Lord, *i. e. the promised Messiah, ye shall die in your Sins.* But if we believe that he is the Christ, the Son of God, we shall be saved. And therefore, the Apostles and Evangelists laboured to convince People that

that Jesus is the Christ. The *Evangelist John* tells us, that he writ an Account of the Life and Actions of our blessed Lord, that we might be thereby convinced that he is the Christ; and that believing this, *we might have Life through his Name.* John xx. 30, 31. The great Things that the *Apostle Paul* preached, when he had received his Commission to publish the Gospel, was that Jesus is the Son of God, or the *Messiah*. Acts ix. 20. *He straitway preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God; and ver. 22. Saul increased the more in Strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ.* Paul endeavoured at *Thessalonica*, to convince the *Jews* that Jesus is the Christ, by shewing them, that the *Messiah* was to suffer, and that therefore his Sufferings ought to be no stumbling Block in the Way of their Faith; but that they ought the rather to believe in him, *i. e.* believe that he is the Christ. Acts xvii. 2, 3, 4. *At Thessalonica*, Paul, as his Manner was, went into the Synagogue, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with the *Jews* out of the Scriptures: Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preached unto you, is the Christ. And some of them believed. *At Corinth* Paul reasoned

soned in the Synagogue every Sabbath-day, and testified, both to Jews and Greeks, that Jesus was the Christ. Acts xviii. 4.

You see, this was the great Doctrine that was preached, and earnestly recommended to the Faith of all that heard it. This we must all believe. This is the Faith that hath the Promise of eternal Life : *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him. John iii. 36.* This believing on him, is believing that he is the *Messiah* ; as is plain, from some Passages in the fourth of *John*. *I know, saith the Woman of Samaria, that Messias cometh which is called Christ.* Jesus said, *I am he.* Upon this, she went into the City, and said unto the Men, *Come and see a Man which told me all things which ever I did ; is not this the Christ ? And many of the Samaritans of that City believed on him, i. e. believed that he was the Messiah, for the saying of the Woman, which testified, he told me all that ever I did, and when the Samaritans were come to him, many more believed, because of his own Word ; and said to the Woman, Now we believe, not because of thy Saying ; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the World.*

When the Hour was come that our Lord should suffer, he prayed for his Disciples, and recommended them to the Favour of God; and the great Thing that he mentioned in their Favour, was their believing that he was no Impostor, no false Christ; *but that he came from God, or was the Christ.* John xvii. 7, 8. *Now they have known, that all Things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the Words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

This being a *fundamental Article* of Christian Belief, necessary to the very being of a *Christian*; that Doctrine which gives the most substantial Evidence to the Truth of it, and which if false, overturns the very Foundations thereof, must also, when fully notified to the World, be *explicitly* believed. For Instance, the Doctrine of *Christ's Resurrection on the third Day* proves, with irresistible Evidence, the Truth of Christ's Commission to redeem a lost World; and upon the Supposition, that he did not rise from the dead on the third Day, it would undeniably follow, that he was an Impostor, and cannot possibly be believed in as the promised *Messiah*. And therefore, since our Lord's Resurrection from the dead, the Belief of it is absolutely

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necessary

necessary to the being of a Christian. *The Righteousness which is of Faith, the Gospel, or the Word of Faith* which the Apostles preached, is this, *that if we confess with our Mouths the Lord Jesus, and believe in our Hearts that God hath raised him from the dead, we shall be saved.* For the Scripture saith, *whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* Rom. x. 6, 8, 9, 11. The Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection, is a principal Foundation of a Believer's Hope and Comfort. His Faith in Christ must stand and fall with it. *If Christ is not risen, saith the Apostle, then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain; ye are yet in your Sins.* 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17.

That the Resurrection of Christ is the great Proof of his being the Messiah, and that without this Proof, it would have been undeniably evident that he was an Impostor, is plain, from the Method which the Apostle took to convince the Jews, *that God, according to his Promise, had of the Seed of David, raised to Israel a Saviour, Jesus.* God, saith he, *raised him from the dead.* And we declare unto you glad Tidings, *how that the Promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their Children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my*

Son, this Day have I begotten thee. Acts
xiii. 23, 30, 32, 33.

I go, saith our Lord, unto Jerusalem, and must suffer many Things of the Elders, and Chief-Priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third Day. Our Lord, if he had not been the *Messiah*, might at this Time have foreseen his Death, the *Rulers* amongst the *Jews* were so enraged against him. And therefore, his foretelling his Death, and its coming to pass accordingly, would not have been a convincing Proof of itself, that he was the *Messiah*. But he could not, unless he had been a *Prophet* come from God, foresee his Resurrection. And therefore his rising on the third Day, as he foretold, is a Demonstration of his being the *Messiah*. But if he had not risen as he foretold, all the World would have concluded justly, that he was a *false Prophet*, and a *false Christ*. Therefore the *Jews* set a Guard upon his Sepulchre, to watch his Body, until the three Days, of which he spake, should be expired.

No Man, who is fully taught the Gospel of Christ, can believe that he is the *Messiah*, unless he believes that he rose from the dead, or that God raised him from the dead. Here then, are the *great fundamental Doctrines*, the *explicit Belief* of which,

which, denominates a Man a *Christian* *.

I proceed to consider,

2. What is required of every *Christian*, with respect to Points of Faith, I mean of such as are already denominated and reputed *Christians*, upon their believing that *Jesus* is the Christ, and that he rose from the dead on the third Day.

Now he that believes *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*, believes him to be his *King* or *Lord*, and to be a *Teacher* come from God. And therefore, he puts himself under his Authority, and must receive Instructions from him, in all the Affairs of Conscience and eternal Salvation. In Consequence of his believing him to be the *Messiah*, he must believe whatever *he*, or his *inspired Apostles* have revealed to the World. Whatever we find in the *holy Scriptures*, we must believe. If we dispute the Truth of any Thing, that we believe Christ has revealed, we deny him to be the *Messiah*, and forfeit the Character of *Christians*. For if we can believe that he imposes upon us, in any one Declaration, we cannot believe that he is the Christ; we cannot believe, that God by a Voice from Heaven, declared, *this is my beloved Son, hear him*. For he that imposes upon us, by

* See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*, pag. 31. and the second Defence, pag. 303—309.

telling us Things that are not true, cannot be the *Messiah*, cannot be the Son of God. And therefore, he who disputes the Truth of any one Doctrine, delivered by Christ or his Apostles, does not, whatever he may pretend to the contrary, believe that Christ is the *Messiah*; and consequently, he is fallen away from the Truth of the Gospel, he is no longer a *Christian*, but an Unbeliever, and *the Wrath of God abideth on him*.

But that I may deliver myself with some Distinctness, in discoursing on this important Point, I will lay down the following Propositions, and treat briefly of each of them in their Order.

1. *Every Man is obliged to use serious and diligent Endeavours, to know the Mind and Will of his Redeemer, revealed in the Scriptures.*

2. *Every Christian is obliged to believe, whatever, upon a sincere and diligent Enquiry, he finds revealed in the Scriptures.*

3. *There are some Truths, of great Importance, delivered with that Plainness, that no Body can mistake the Sense of the Texts that contain them: Such Truths are explicitly to be believed by every Christian that has Opportunities of becoming acquainted with them.*

4. *There are several dark and intricate Truths in the holy Scriptures, which a great many Persons may be ignorant of, without hazarding their Salvation.*

5. *There*

5. *There are several Truths so obscurely delivered in Scripture, that sincere Enquirers may disbelieve them, without offending God.*

6. *There are divine Truths necessary to be believed by some Christians, which others are not obliged to believe.*

1. *Every Christian Man is obliged to use serious and diligent Endeavours, to know the Mind and Will of his Redeemer, revealed in the Scriptures. God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son. And ought we not to enquire diligently, what Message the Son of God has brought from Heaven? How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will? We may well suppose, that there is something of the last Importance to us, in the Revelation brought us from Heaven by the Son of God, and confirmed in so extraordinary a Manner. They that have carefully consulted it, can witness, that it concerns our Life of Grace here, and of Blessedness*

hereafter ; that our All is bound up in this gracious Discovery of the Will of God, all our Hope, all our Mercies, all our Blessedness, all our Claims. It is the Report of all the Grace, as well as of all the Truth, which came by Jesus Christ. Nothing can be plainer, than that we are obliged to search and study the Scriptures, wherein the Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy and Love of God in our Redemption, are fully displayed, and laid open to our View. We ought to pray for the Assistance of the *Spirit of Light and Truth*, in all our Enquiries after the Knowledge of God's Will in the Scriptures. We ought to read with humble and devout Minds ; with Minds divested of Prejudice, and disengaged from the Influence of Party-Notions. *Lay apart, saith the Apostle James, all Filthiness, and Superfluity of Naughtiness, and receive with Meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your Souls.* James i. 21. We ought frequently to meditate upon the Word of God, and to compare one Text of Scripture with another ; that by a mutual Communication of Light, our Views and Discoveries may be the clearer. After this manner, we must endeavour to come to the Knowledge of the true Sense and Import of Divine Revelation.

2. *Every Christian is obliged to believe whatever, upon a sincere and diligent Enquiry,*

quiry, he finds revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Dare any Man give the Lye to the God of Truth! or dare any dispute the Faithfulness and Veracity of the great *Christian Prophet*! Whoever denies the Truth of any thing which he believes, upon a diligent Enquiry, is contained in the *Christian Revelation*, at the same Time, denies that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, and renounces his Allegiance to him. But then, we must not imagine, that every Man that disputes the Truth of some particular Tenets, which we find in our *Catechisms*, or *Confessions of Faith*, drawn up by *fallible* and *passionate* Men, disputes the Truth of any Part of our *Saviour's Revelation*. No, he may not, perhaps, find the *disputed Decisions of Men*, amongst those of his *Lord* and *Master*. He hath learned to call no *Man Master* upon *Earth*; for one is his *Master*, even *Christ*, and all true *Christians* are his *Brethren*. Mat. xxiii. 8. And therefore, the only Rule of his Faith is the *holy Scriptures*. These he consults, and from these, in the Use of proper Means, he learns his Faith.

Men of Sobriety, who profess themselves *Christians*, are not wont to deny the Truth of any Thing which they find revealed in the *Scriptures*. They think themselves bound by their Allegiance to *Christ* to believe the Truth of every Thing, which, upon a serious
and

and diligent Enquiry, they plainly discover to be contained in the *Christian Revelation*; and it is great Uncharitableness for any *Christian Brother* to suspect the contrary. What does any Man suspect that his Fellow-Christian tells his Lord, his Saviour and his God, that he lyes! The Language of every one, who disbelieves any Thing which he finds delivered by our *Saviour* or his *Apostles*, is this; "The *Scriptures* inform us of such and such Things that are entirely false; *Christ* and his *Apostles* are Liars; *Christ* is not the *Son of God*, was not sent by him, had no Commission from him: He and his pretended *Apostles* are Deceivers. *Christ* shall not be my *King* and *Ruler*; he shall be no *Prophet* of mine." This, I say, is certainly the Language of every one who denies his Assent to any Thing, which he really apprehends to be contained in the *Christian Revelation*. And now, who dare be so uncharitable as to suspect, that a sober Man, professing Christianity, is guilty of so much Wickedness! If any are arrived at this Pitch of Uncharitableness, O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret!

3. There are some Truths, of great Importance, delivered with that Plainness, that no Body can mistake the Sense of the Texts that contain them. Such Truths are explicitly to be believed by every Christian, who

who has Opportunities of becoming acquainted with them.

By Truths of great Importance, I understand such, as have a great and manifest Tendency to promote true and undissembled Piety. The Value of any Doctrine in Religion, is to be judged of, by the Influence which it has upon our Practice; and the Faith of a Christian is of no Significancy in the Sight of God, if it does not purify the Heart, and reform the Life. *What doth it profit, my Brethren, though a Man say he hath Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith save him? Faith, if it hath not Works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a Man may say, thou hast Faith, and I have Works: shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will shew thee my Faith by my Works. Was not Abraham our Father justified by Works? Jam. ii. 14, 17, 18, 21.* The Virtue and Excellency of the Doctrines of the Gospel, shine forth in the exemplary Lives of God's faithful Servants. They have had their proper Influence upon those Hearts and Lives that are reformed and renewed. *Exhort Servants, saith the Apostle to Titus, to be obedient to their own Masters, that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things. For the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts,*
we

we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, looking for the blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.
 Titus ii. 9,—14.

This being the undoubted Tendency of the great and important Declarations of the Gospel, we may be assured, that the *Spirit of God* has revealed them in such a Manner, as is most adapted to *ordinary Capacities*. The Generality of *Christians*, have neither Leisure, nor Capacity, to make nice and laborious Searches into sublime and mysterious Truths, They lie beyond the Compass of their View, and yet they have Souls to be saved ; Souls for which Christ died ; Souls as precious in the Sight of God, as those of the wise and noble. *Our Lord was anointed Prophet, to preach the Gospel to the Poor. Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid those Things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight.* Mat. xi. 25, 26. The great Plainness and Simplicity of Gospel Truths, offended the *learned Greeks*. They wanted *sublimier Mysteries*, than they found in the Gospel of Christ.

Christ. The Greeks sought after Wisdom, saith the Apostle. 1 Cor. i. 22.

Now, I say, as the great and saving Truths of the *Gospel*, are so very plain; as they are not folded up in *Mysteries*, that require deep and skilful Penetration, they must be *explicitly* believed by every *Christian*, that has Opportunities of becoming acquainted with them. They are lost in *Obstinacy*, and in a careless Neglect of the Means of Information, from whom the most weighty and important Truths of the *Gospel* are hid. Does any Man, who has been for some Time in Possession of the *Gospel*, deserve the Name of a *Christian*, who does not believe a Judgment to come, when we must all *receive according to the Deeds done in the Body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil*? Does he deserve the Name of a *Christian*, who does not believe, *that to them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, God will give eternal Life: but to them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation, and Wrath; Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. Rom. ii. 7, 8, 9.*

I would observe, that the *Promises of the Gospel* are of the greatest Importance
to

to a *Christian*, and that an explicit Belief of these Promises, is more acceptable to God, redounds more to his Glory, and is more necessary to the Maintenance of the Christian Life and Graces, than any other Faith whatsoever: particularly than Faith in the more *dark* and *mysterious Doctrines of Christianity*. Upon this Score, and because they are generally delivered in Terms that are plain and obvious to vulgar Apprehensions, I think they ought to be *expressly* believed by every *Christian*, that has Opportunities of coming to the Knowledge of them.

That believing the *Promises of God*, is highly acceptable unto him; and, in a very particular Manner, redounds to his Honour and Glory, is easily made appear.

It is an Acknowledgment of his Goodness and Mercy. It is founded on a firm Persuasion of his great Loving-kindness, and tender Compassion; and it is a relying on his Truth and Faithfulness. How highly acceptable, such an Instance of Homage is to the Divine Being, may be learnt from the Value which he put upon the Faith of the antient *Patriarchs*; and particularly of *Abraham* the Father of them that believe; which was no other, than the Faith which I am recommending*.

* See *Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity*. pag. 245.

Against Hope, Abraham believed in Hope. He staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief; but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God. And therefore, his Faith was imputed to him for Righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God.

If we enquire what was Sarah's Faith, the *Apostle* will inform us. She judged him faithful who had promised her a Son in her Old Age; and because she believed the Promise of God, he gave her Strength to conceive Seed, and she was delivered of a Child, when she was past Age; and a numerous Posterity descended from her. Therefore, *i. e.* because she believed the Promise of God, *sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the Stars of the Sky for Multitude, and as the Sand which is by the Sea shore innumerable.* It is said of all those *Worthies*, who believed the Promises, and died in Faith, though they had not received them, *that they obtained a good Report through Faith.* They were approved of God, and are justified by this standing Testimony of their Faith and Patience, *Heb. xi.*

It is as easy to shew, that Faith in the divine Promises, has a special Tendency to promote Holiness, and to secure the *Christian's* Perseverance in the Path of Virtue.

Promises of Grace and Favour, engage the Affections to God, and are the greatest Support

Support to a *Christian*, in Times of Difficulty and Danger.

That the Promises of the Gospel are a great Encouragement, a powerful Motive to the Practice of Virtue, is not only evident in itself, but plainly attested by the Reasoning of the *Apostle Paul*. Writing to the *Corinthians*, he thus argues with them; *Ye are the Temple of the living God: As God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* Having therefore these Promises, dearly Beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18. and Chap. vii. v. 1. Whereby, says Peter, are given to us exceeding great and glorious Promises; that by these ye might be Partakers of the divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust. 2 Pet. i. 4.

It is also evident from the *Apostle's* manner of Writing to the *persecuted Hebrews*, that Faith in the Promises, is a great Security to the *persecuted Christian*, and of powerful Influence to prevent his drawing back, and revolting from God. Heb. x. 35—38. *Cast not away therefore your Confidence, which hath great Recompence*
of

of Reward. For ye have need of Patience, that, after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by Faith: But if any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him. In the next Chapter, for their Encouragement, he sets before them the Examples of those, who stedfastly persisted in the Way of their Duty, by a firm Reliance on the Promises of God, and so obtained a good Report.

The *Apostle Paul*, in his first *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, having discoursed concerning the *Resurrection*, concludes with an Exhortation to be stedfast and to abound in Holiness. 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

From all that I have said, it is evident, that Faith in the plain and obvious Promises of the Gospel, is of the greatest Importance to a *Christian*, as well as highly acceptable to God; and therefore it is of the last Consequence to every *Christian*, that has Opportunities of becoming acquainted with them, to believe them *explicitly*.

I am fully persuaded, that a plain and honest *Christian*, who firmly believes the

Goodness and Faithfulness of God, reaps abundantly more Advantage by such a Faith, and gives much greater Glory to his God and Saviour, than the wrangling Disputant, or the uncharitable Zealot, can possibly do, by his Faith in *dark and speculative Opinions*.

4. *There are several dark and intricate Truths in the holy Scripture, which a great many Persons may be ignorant of, without hazarding their Salvation.*

If any should maintain the contrary, they would make the Way to Heaven narrower than God has made it. If every Thing that is contained in the Scripture, must be *explicitly* believed, in the *full and exact Sense* of the *Revealer*, who among the Poor and unlearned Vulgar, to whom Christ was sent with a special Commission to preach the Gospel, nay, who among even the Wise and Learned shall be saved? There is a great many Difficulties in the *holy Scripture*, which have exercised the *Genius's* of the most *skilful Interpreters*; who, after they had laboured long, and diligently in the Search, were obliged to acknowledge their Ignorance. If the *learned Scribe* cannot penetrate into the Meaning of many dark and obscure Passages of *Scripture*, notwithstanding that he labours with all his Might, in the Use of proper Means, to spell out the Meaning; how should the poor *illiterate Mechanick*,
who

who is not furnished with the thousandth Part of the Advantages that the Learned are in Possession of, attain to the Knowledge of it?

How should it possibly enter into the Thoughts of any good Man to imagine, that a gracious and compassionate God, should suspend the Salvation of his weak fallible Creatures, or even the least Degree of their Happiness, upon their believing every obscure Passage of *divine Writ*, in its *full Sense and Meaning*! We may assure ourselves, that whatever is necessary to be believed by *every Christian*, is clearly revealed, spoke down to the meanest Capacity. Whenever we find any Passages of *Scripture*, that remain cover'd and perplex'd with Difficulties, after a sincere and diligent Enquiry, we may rest assured, that the Belief of them is, neither necessary to Salvation, nor of any great Service to the *Christian Life*.

There was a *Veil* upon many Passages in the *Old Testament*, that are of great Importance to us *Christians*. There were many *dark Emblems*, *typical Representations*, and *obscure Prophecies*, so long as the Knowledge of their full Meaning was of less Importance, till the coming of the *Messiah*, the *Veil* remained upon them untaken away: But now that their Importance is become much greater, as being of eminent

Service to confirm our Faith in Jesus as the *Messiah*, the *Veil* is done away in Christ. And we all with open Face, beholding, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory. 2 Cor. iii. 14—18.

It was prophesied, that, in the Days of the *Messiah*, the People that walked in Darkness, should see great Light. Isaiah ix. 2. *Christ is a Light to lighten the Gentiles.* And therefore, doubtless, Truths of great Importance to us, are set in the clearest Light; so that *he that runs may read.* Our great Prophet has not left Truths necessary to be believed, in Darkness and Obscurity. And therefore, as I observed before, whenever, in the reading of God's Word, we find ourselves perplexed with Difficulties, and cannot come at the Meaning of the *inspired Penman*, we may safely conclude, that our Ignorance of such Portions of Scripture will be no Detriment to our Souls, nor any Bar to our Salvation.

The whole of our Duty, in such Cases, seems plainly to be this; we must use our best Endeavours to come to the Knowledge of the Truth; and if, after suitable Pains taken, we still remain in Ignorance, so that we cannot *explicitly* believe the Truth we have been in Search of, we must however believe it *implicitly*, i. e. we must believe, that

that whatever is the Sense and Meaning of the Passage under Consideration, it doubtless, contains a certain infallible Truth, because God that cannot lie, has spoke it.

s. *There are several Truths so obscurely delivered in Scripture, that sincere Enquirers may disbelieve them without offending God.*

What a Number of Controversies in Divinity are there, amongst *Christians*, about Points that are not thought *fundamental* by any of the contending Parties! Now in such Cases, where there is a real Difference in Sentiments, one Party or other must *disbelieve* the Truth. He that believes a Falshood, *disbelieves* the contrary Truth. But then we are to observe, that the *erring Christian* does not *disbelieve* the Truth, under the Notion of a *divine Declaration*. He does not give the *Spirit of God* the Lie; in Regard he does not believe that it is revealed in *Scripture*. He looks upon it as a *mistaken Sense* put upon the *Word of God*; and under that Notion he *disbelieves* it.

I will endeavour to explain my Meaning, by an Instance to our Purpose.

There are *Christians*, who conclude from some Passages in the *Scripture*, that *Infants* ought to be baptized: There are other *Christians*, who think it evident from *Scripture*, that none but *adult Persons* are to be baptized.

baptized. Here, now, are quite different Sentiments about a Point, which, I hope, neither Party takes for a fundamental One. The erring mistaken Party disbelieves the Truth; yet, I verily believe, without offending God. I believe that the erring Party, having made serious and diligent Enquiry into the Will of God, and acting suitably to their present Views, are, notwithstanding their Mistake, as much approved of by their great Lord and Master, as the Party that believes the Truth, and acts according to it.

Whoever has a real Love for Truth; uses his best Endeavours to find it; always lies open to Conviction, and yields to the Force of Evidence; though oftentimes, in doing so, he is obliged to part with some of his old beloved Notions, cannot, I think, by any Mistakes he may fall into, in such a Method, possibly offend God. He does all that is required of him to find the Truth; and when he thinks he has found it, he believes and embraces it; wherein is he to be blamed?

This is a Point of great Importance, and deserves to be more fully considered.

I will make the following *Reflections* upon it.

If the Errors of holy and upright Men, who make diligent and serious Enquiries into the Sense of divine Revelation, do not offend

offend God ; if they may fall into Error, and yet be innocent ; then it is plain, that we ought not to censure and revile them, on the Account of such Notions, as we apprehend to be erroneous.

I may have made diligent Enquiry, and be fully persuaded of the Truth of my Opinion : But this gives me no Right to censure and condemn my *Brother*, who does not believe it. If my full Persuasion of the Truth of my Opinion, even though it be the Result of sincere Enquiry, gives me a Right to censure, judge and condemn my *Brother* ; he may have an equal Right, on the same Account, to censure, judge and condemn me. For he may have been no less sincere in his Enquiries than I have been : And he may be as fully persuaded of the Truth of his Opinion, and of the Falshood of mine, as I am of the Truth of mine, and of the Falshood of his. I have certainly no more Reason to abuse and censure my *sober Christian Brother*, for differing in Opinion from me, than he has to abuse and censure me on the like Account. If I apprehend, that my *Brother's* Error may have some bad Influence upon Practice ; and that if he did but believe, what I am fully convinced is true, he would be furnished with more Motives to an holy Life, I ought to pity him ; and should, as I have Opportunity, endeavour to convince him of

his Mistake : But I ought not to reproach him for his Opinion ; I ought not to do him the least Prejudice, in his Reputation, Body, or Estate, for not thinking just as I do ; or for not being of the same Opinion with me. It is *uncharitable Bigotry*, to bear hard upon my *Brother*, for having different Sentiments from my own.

This Spirit of reviling, censuring and oppressing all that differ from us, has often set the *Christian World* on Fire. How much *Christian Blood* has been spilt, how many Families impoverished, how many Nations depopulated by a serious Zeal for Truth ! *i. e.* for what the persecuting Party has really thought to be Truth. When the Oppressed have recovered Strength, and thought themselves in a Condition to distress those that oppressed them, for not being of their Opinion in Matters of Religion ; they have suffered themselves to be transported, with the like furious Zeal for what they have thought to be Truth, and have born hard upon all that were of a different Persuasion. Thus *Persecution*, in a greater or less Degree, has gone the Round of Parties. They have taken their Turns, as they have had Opportunity, in the *un-Christian Work* ; till true Brotherly Love and Charity have been almost extinguished, and banished the *Christian World*, by the

Preva-

Prevalency of a censorious Spirit, and an uncharitable Bigotry.

If Christians were fully established in the Belief of the Innocency of involuntary Error, what a glorious and godlike Face of Affairs would be seen in the Christian World! Whilst every Man would carefully study his Bible, and believe according to his Light and Evidence; he would love all that should take the same Method, though the Result of their Enquiries should not be the same in every Respect. He would think with himself, that he is far from being infallible, and that he may be mistaken in a great many Points in Divinity, even after a serious and diligent Search. And as he knows, he has carefully endeavoured to find the Truth, and has readily embraced whatever he apprehended to be revealed in the holy Scripture, and that therefore God will not be offended with his involuntary Mistakes; so he believes and hopes his serious Christian Brother has carefully consulted his Bible, and believes whatever he finds revealed there; and that if he could find that the Opinions, which, at present, he apprehends to be erroneous, were delivered in the Scripture, he would readily embrace them, and renounce his own. And therefore he does not censure or condemn him; believing that he is as much approved of by the great Searcher of Hearts, notwith-

notwithstanding his unwilling Mistakes, as, either himself, or any of his Persuasion, though they may have found and embraced the Truth.

What a *Godlike Spirit* is this! How would *Religion* flourish, how would *Brotherly Love* abound, where such a Spirit should prevail! How amicably would Men maintain and dispute about their different Sentiments! They would not provoke one another with *opprobrious Names*, or uncharitable Surmises; but would treat one another as *dear Brethren*, and endeavour, in the Spirit of Meekness, to convince each other of their Mistakes. And surely, in such a Method, *Truth* would be always triumphant, and maintain itself upon the most solid Basis; even that of *rational Conviction*. Whereas, wherever a *Spirit of Bigotry* prevails, and Men are reviled, reproached and oppressed for maintaining Opinions different from those that have the Advantage of being generally reputed *Orthodox*; there *Pride* and *Ignorance*, *implicit Belief*, and *Hypocritical Professions* of what is so generally received as *Orthodox*, supply the Place of *Honesty* and *Sincerity*, *solid Learning*, and *rational Evidence*.

I pass on to the
6th, and last Proposition. *There are divine Truths necessary to be believed by some Christians,*

Christians, which others are not obliged to believe.

There are several Truths which lie out of the Reach of the *Vulgar*; which therefore they are not obliged to know and believe, I mean, with an *explicit* Faith: But the Learned, with a little Application, can discover a great many of these Truths; they see them plainly, and understand them fully, and therefore they ought to believe them.

Every Man ought to believe the Truth of every Thing, that, upon a sincere and careful Enquiry, he finds revealed in the *Bible*: And whoever, upon a like Enquiry, does not find it, but perhaps quite the contrary, is under no Obligation to believe it. He ought to believe what appears to him to be the Truth, and not what appears to another to be such.

According as Men have different Advantages, and Capacities for seeking and discovering the Truth, their Obligations to believe this or the other Truth will be different. Hear the *Apostle Paul*. *One Man esteemeth one Day above another; Another esteemeth every Day alike. Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind.* Rom. xiv. 5. The more learned and judicious *Christian* knew that Christ had abrogated the *Jewish Feasts and Fasts*, and therefore he was obliged to believe it, and to regulate

late his Practice accordingly ; but the *weaker Christian* could not apprehend this, and therefore he was not obliged to believe it, till farther Light discovered the Truth of it to him. *His Business*, as well as that of the *judicious*, was to labour, as well as he could, in the Search of Truth, and then to act according to the Light and Evidence of his *upright Conscience*. He was not to be determined by the Judgment of others, against his own ; but was to be fully persuaded in his own Mind ; and then, a Conduct agreeable to such a Persuasion became his Duty.

Thus I have finished my Design. And have Nothing more to add, but my Wishes that Men would carefully study the *Bible*, without any Bias from *human Schemes*, or *Party Notions* : And that they would learn to think charitably of all Men of *Sobriety* and *Virtue* ; though they may understand several Texts of *Scripture*, in a Sense different, from what they themselves apprehend to be their true Meaning.



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